

# **Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods – Ward 23 Multiplex Study – Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments – Decision Report – Approval**

Date: January 7, 2025

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Ward: 23 - Scarborough North

**Planning Application Number: 24 139084 ESC 23 OZ**

## **SUMMARY**

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Building on the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) City-wide Multiplex Study, City Council directed staff to undertake an area specific study within an area that roughly corresponds to the boundaries of Ward 23 – Scarborough North. The study explored the potential of permitting multiplexes with up to six dwelling units on properties designated *Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan, and increasing the maximum building depth up to 19 metres, regardless of the lot dimensions.

This report summarizes the work undertaken and recommends approving area specific Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments to permit multiplexes with five and six dwelling units (also referred to as fiveplexes and sixplexes, respectively) in all residential zones within the study area. The proposed amendments build on the existing city-wide multiplex permissions for up to four units, and do not include changes to built form performance standards. This study is a significant pilot which brings forward permissions to expand city-wide multiplex dwelling unit permissions from four to six units within a single residential home. This is one of 54 actions in Toronto's 2023 Housing Action Plan (HAP), which seeks to increase the housing supply within complete, inclusive, and sustainable communities with critical infrastructure to support growth. The new homes enabled by the HAP will contribute to the provincial housing target of 285,000 new homes in Toronto by 2031.

As part of the City's commitments under the federal Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF), the City has committed to permit more low-rise, multi-unit housing development through as-of-right zoning by-laws in *Neighbourhoods*, including permissions for residential buildings with up to six dwelling units. Adoption of the recommendations in this report marks a significant milestone towards meeting this commitment in 2025.

The recommended amendments are consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement 2024 and also in keeping with the [recently adopted new Chapter 1 to the Official Plan vision](#), which aims to eliminate disparities, prioritize climate action, and become the world's most inclusive city.

The Ward 23 Multiplex Study consisted of a work program that included a jurisdictional scan of multiplex permissions in other cities; a detailed review of multiplex development applications submitted to the city; a three-phased analysis prepared in consultation with ReHousing; and engagement with local residents and industry professionals. The key findings of the above streams of work were analyzed and informed the recommended Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments.

Expanding the multiplex permissions will increase new low-rise housing options for Torontonians in Ward 23. New residents in low-rise neighbourhoods can help stabilize declining populations, optimize the use of existing infrastructure, and support local retail establishments and services. While it is anticipated that most multiplex units will be delivered as market rental housing, they would provide ground-related alternatives, adding to the range of housing in Toronto's low-rise, mid-rise, and tall building types. Additionally, these new permissions could unlock additional opportunities for individuals to access funding and low interest rate loans for housing projects through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). While the proposed amendments will expand the planning permission for up to six units, this report also details potential challenges to their implementation beyond simply adjusting the zoning permissions. These issues, and other lessons learned through the Ward 23 Multiplex Study, will inform ongoing work being undertaken by City Planning and other Divisions to permit and promote multiplexes city-wide.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. City Council amend the Official Plan substantially in accordance with the proposed Official Plan Amendment 762 appended as Attachment 5 to this report.
2. City Council amend Zoning By-law 569-2013, as amended, substantially in accordance with the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment appended as Attachment 6 to this report.
3. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to make such stylistic and technical changes to the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments as may be required.
4. City Council direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of Official Plan Amendment 762 and the Zoning By-law Amendment in facilitating fiveplex and sixplex developments, and to report to the Planning and Housing Committee in the second quarter of 2028 on monitoring outcomes and any necessary revisions to the Official Plan policy, Zoning By-law, or other changes to improve the implementation and facilitation of fiveplex and sixplex construction.

5. City Council direct the Executive Director of Environment, Climate and Forestry to refuse, at the Executive Director's discretion, a permit to injure or destroy a tree protected under Municipal Code Chapters 608, 658, and 813, received in relation to a building permit application to construct or expand a multiplex building type, and to advise the applicant to meet with Development Review and Urban Forestry staff as appropriate to consider how the location, massing and design of the proposed building or expansion can be amended to protect the By-law protected tree(s) in question.

6. City Council direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to track and review the number of by-law protected trees damaged or removed as a result of the construction of fiveplex and sixplex developments, and the number and type of minor variances requested and approved for fiveplex and sixplex developments, as part of the monitoring program and to report on these findings to the Planning and Housing Committee in the second quarter of 2028.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACTS**

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

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

## **EQUITY STATEMENT**

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The City of Toronto recognizes that housing is essential to the inherent dignity and well-being of the person and to building sustainable and inclusive communities. Access to safe, good quality and affordable housing is an important determinant of physical and mental health, and is a fundamental goal of the City's Housing TO 2020-2030 Action Plan. The HousingTO Plan recognizes that the right to adequate housing is a fundamental right affirmed in international law. Adequate and affordable housing is also a cornerstone of inclusive neighbourhoods, supports the environment, and improves the socio-economic status of individuals, families, and communities as a whole. The Toronto Official Plan recognizes the need to take necessary actions to address inequities and requires decisions on land use to be informed by equity and that the outcomes of policies and actions are monitored and measured.

As the City of Toronto looks to rebuild and recover after COVID-19, the EHON initiative can directly advance recommendations laid out in the Towards Recovery and Building a Renewed Toronto report. Specifically, Recommendation 68 of the report calls on the City to apply the principle of "build back better" to land use planning and to improve the city's overall built form by prioritizing gentle density that places greater emphasis on a mix of building types and uses, including low-rise residential, retail and services that support transit use.

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

## **CLIMATE STATEMENT**

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On October 2, 2019, City Council declared a climate emergency for the purpose of "naming, framing and deepening our commitment to protecting our economy, our ecosystems and our community from climate change" (Item MM10.3). Toronto City Council has adopted an ambitious strategy to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions in Toronto to net zero by 2040 – 10 years earlier than initially proposed – and to be more resilient and adapt to the impacts that climate change will have on the City and its residents. City Council has also recently adopted a new vision through Chapter 1 of the Official Plan which seeks to achieve net zero emissions throughout the City by applying a climate change lens to all aspects of planning, and becoming resilient and adaptable to the future impacts of a changing climate.

Permitting additional opportunities for missing middle housing helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the efficient use of land and resources. Infill within the built-up area enables low carbon transportation choices, such as walking, cycling, and public transit. Housing built in Toronto also reduces sprawl and transportation driven greenhouse gas emissions regionally.

Infill development enables the use of existing infrastructure, which avoids carbon-intensive infrastructure built elsewhere. Smaller buildings and buildings with multiple units, such as garden suites, laneway suites, multiplex housing, and low-rise apartment buildings, can more easily achieve net zero operational emissions, as 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.

The City Planning Division will continue to consider missing middle housing approaches through a climate impact lens as part of the EHON work plan.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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On May 10, 2023, City Council adopted Item PH3.16 "Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods: Multiplex Study - Final Report" to amend the Official Plan and City-wide Zoning By-law to permit duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes city-wide and directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of OPA 649 and Zoning By-law 474– 2023.

City Council also directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to review the potential to permit multiplexes with up to six units and with a building depth of 19 metres for all residential zoned lots generally bounded by Steeles Avenue to the north, Midland Avenue to the west, Highway 401 to the south, and Neilson Road and Rouge River to the east.

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

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

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

On December 13, 2023, City Council adopted Item MM13.27 “Federal Housing Accelerator Fund - Supporting Generational Transformation of Toronto’s Housing System”, which 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.

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

On May 22, 2024, City Council adopted item PH12.3 “Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods: Major Streets Study - Final Report”, to permit townhouse and small-scale apartment buildings on major streets on lands designated in the Official Plan as Neighbourhoods throughout the City.

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

On November 13, 2024, City Council adopted a report titled “Build More Homes: Expanding Incentives for Purpose Built Rental Housing”, which directed staff to report back on implementation tools to provide incentives for purpose built rental homes in 2025.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.EX18.2>

On November 13, 2024, City Council directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, as part of the Multiplex Monitoring Program, to clarify multiplex permissions in semi-detached residential buildings and report back with any potential zoning by-law amendments in the second quarter of 2025.

City Council also request the City Solicitor, in consultation with other appropriate divisions to consider amendments to the development charges by-law for multiplex properties with more than four units and report back at the earliest opportunity through the planned report reviewing development charges.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH16.13>

On December 5, 2024, Planning and Housing Committee adopted item PH17.11 “Housing Accelerator Fund: Expanding Permissions in Neighbourhoods for Six Units and Four Storeys - Preliminary Report”, which provided an overview of the current policy context and ongoing work to permit six-unit buildings in Ward 23 and set out a proposed workplan to identify opportunities to expand permissions for six-unit and four-storey residential buildings city-wide.

The Planning and Housing Committee also requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to consider lessons learned from the Ward 23 Multiplex Study for city-wide implementation, undertake consultation in 2025, and report back with final recommendations in the fourth quarter of 2025.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH17.11>

## **BACKGROUND**

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Work to expand permissions for additional housing opportunities, including multi-unit residential buildings, in Toronto’s neighbourhoods has been ongoing since 2018.

### **Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods**

Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) is a City initiative to facilitate more low-rise housing in residential neighbourhoods to meet the needs of a growing city. The EHON work program responds to several City and Provincial policy objectives to provide a full range of housing options for Torontonians, in a form that makes efficient use of land, infrastructure, and existing services. These low-rise housing forms, commonly referred to as the ‘missing middle’, can range from garden suites to low-rise walk-up apartments. All of these housing types can be found in Toronto today, but have historically been limited in where they can be built.

In May 2023, City Council adopted Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments to permit multiplexes consisting of up to four units on lands designated *Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan as part of the City-wide Multiplex Study. Updated performance standards for multiplex buildings were established in zoning while ensuring they fit within the neighbourhood, and improve financial feasibility. The Official Plan Amendment (OPA 649) and associated Zoning By-laws 474-2023 and 66-2024 are now in full force and effect.

As part of the same Council decision, staff were directed to explore the opportunity to permit multiplexes with up to six units within an area that roughly corresponds to the boundaries of Ward 23, and were directed to examine amending the building depth performance standard to a maximum of 19 metres, regardless of the lot dimensions. Staff in Community Planning have since undertaken this study (the ‘Ward 23 Multiplex Study’) and have refined the study boundary to match the Ward 23 boundaries. The boundary limits of Ward 23 are illustrated in Attachment 1.

## Housing Accelerator Fund

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.

Planning and Housing Committee adopted a preliminary report on December 5, 2024, which provided an overview of the current policy context and ongoing work to permit six-unit buildings in Ward 23; summarized emerging trends and best practices in other jurisdictions for multi-unit residential buildings; identified potential barriers; and set out a proposed workplan to identify opportunities to expand permissions for six-unit and four-storey residential buildings city-wide. The Planning and Housing Committee directed staff to bring forward a final report in the fourth quarter of 2025. Staff's work on the Ward 23 Multiplex Study, as outlined in this report, will facilitate next steps in advancing the city-wide permissions.

## **RECOMMENDED OFFICIAL PLAN AND ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENTS**

This report recommends amendments to the Toronto Official Plan and the city-wide Zoning By-law to permit multiplexes containing up to six units on any residential lot within Ward 23 – Scarborough North.

The proposed Official Plan Amendment (OPA) would remove the lands in Ward 23 from the existing Site and Area Specific Policy Number 826 – Multiplexes in *Neighbourhoods* (SASP No. 826) in Chapter 7. Instead, lands designated *Neighbourhoods* in Ward 23 would be subject to the proposed SASP attached as Attachment 5 to this report. Since the Ward 23 Multiplex Study builds on the City-wide Multiplex Study, the proposed SASP would generally maintain the existing policies, with a minor modification to enable multiplexes with up to six units on lands designated *Neighbourhoods* within Ward 23. Consistent with SASP No. 826, the proposed SASP would:

- exempt multiplexes from certain policies contained in Section 4.1 - *Neighbourhoods* of the Official Plan, to clarify that multiplex building types are among those that contribute to their physically stable, low-rise scale across the city;
- implement criteria for the development of multiplexes in *Neighbourhoods*, to ensure they maintain the general development pattern and physical features of the area;
- encourage safe, accessible and livable units;
- encourage green and sustainable building practices as well as expanding the tree canopy;
- include policy language that emphasizes the need for multiplex building types to accommodate more ground-related units, with some alternative standards but within the same general scale of the local area; and,

- enable the consideration of zoning variances where they are needed to achieve sustainable design and/or tree preservation.

Additionally, a new policy is proposed to encourage parking for active modes of transportation, such as bicycles.

The key change introduced through the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBLA) is to permit fiveplexes and sixplexes on lots zoned RD (Residential Detached), RS (Residential Semi-Detached), RT (Residential Townhouse), and RM (Residential Multiple) in Ward 23. This includes the permission to create a new building with up to six dwelling units, and the ability to convert an existing detached house to have up to six dwelling units and maintain the built form of the existing detached house. Furthermore, the ZBLA intends to maintain the existing performance standards for multiplexes with four units. No change to the existing building depth or other performance standards, such as building length or height is proposed currently. The multiplex monitoring team will bring forward a report in the summer of 2025 and any potential changes to the multiplex performance standards will be made through this report.

## **POLICY & REGULATION CONSIDERATIONS**

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### **Planning Act**

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

### **Provincial Planning Statement, 2024**

On October 20, 2024, the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) came into effect and combines the PPS (2020) and the Growth Plan (2020) into a single policy document. All decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) and shall conform to provincial plans, including the Greenbelt Plan (2017) and others.

The PPS provides policy direction province-wide on land use planning and development and speaks to building homes while sustaining strong and competitive communities, making wise use of and managing resources, and protecting public health and safety. More specifically, the PPS includes policies that direct planning authorities to:

- provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet projected requirements of current and future residents;
- promote densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities, and support the use of active transportation; and,



- support general intensification and redevelopment to support the achievement of complete communities.

## **City of Toronto Official Plan**

The City's Official Plan (2006) is founded on a growth management strategy which steers growth and change to some parts of the city, while generally protecting others from more significant change. *Mixed Use Areas*, *Regeneration Areas*, *Employment Areas*, and *Institutional Areas* absorb most of the anticipated increase in jobs and population. *Neighbourhoods*, which comprise 35.4 percent of the city's land area, are described as "stable but not static", with some physical change expected over time. Chapter 1 of the Toronto Official Plan sets out the City's shared priorities, vision and principles of reconciliation, access, equity, and inclusion. Section 1.2 of the Plan recognizes Toronto's growth in population and jobs coupled with larger economic changes places immense pressure on housing, making it difficult for residents to find, keep, and afford their homes. Taking a human rights-based approach to housing, the Plan encourages diverse housing choices that provide a full range of housing forms, tenure, and affordability for all residents.

Currently, *Neighbourhoods* are primarily composed of low-density residential uses in low scale building types, including detached houses, semi-detached houses, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, various forms of townhouses, ancillary buildings like laneway and garden suites, interspersed with apartment buildings that are no higher than four storeys.

A key objective of the Plan is to ensure that new development is sensitive, gradual and "fit" the existing physical character to respect and reinforce the general physical patterns in *Neighbourhoods*. Policy 4.1.5 further specifies that proposed development within *Neighbourhoods* will be materially consistent with the prevailing physical character of properties in both the broader and immediate contexts. The development criteria of Official Plan Policy 4.1.5 present challenging policy barriers to developing multiplexes in *Neighbourhoods*, even in areas where multiplex building types are permitted in the zoning by-law. The weight given to prevailing building types and existing physical form limits achievement of the Official Plan's many other stated objectives, including those in the recently adopted new Chapter 1.

As noted above, the City-wide Multiplex Study introduced SASP No. 826. The purpose of the SASP was to clarify that multiplexes are a permitted building type in all *Neighbourhoods*, subject to certain development criteria and exempt from others listed in Policy 4.1.5 of the Official Plan. The intent is to allow multiplexes to be built to the same general scale and applicable zoning standards for low-rise building types.

## **EHON Major Streets**

City Council also adopted an Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment which would permit townhouses and small scale apartment buildings (up to 60 units and a maximum height of 6 storeys) along major streets within the residential zones as further discussed

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

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

Chapter 10 of the Zoning By-law, Residential Zone Category, implements the policies of the *Neighbourhoods* designation from the Official Plan. This zone category includes a full range of low-rise residential building types which are contained within different zones. The Residential Zone Category contains the following zones:

- **Residential (R) Zone** which permits a broad range of low-rise residential building types including laneway suites, garden suites, detached houses, semi-detached houses, townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and apartment buildings.
- **Residential Detached (RD) Zone** which permits laneway suites, garden suites, detached houses, duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes.
- **Residential Semi-Detached (RS) Zone** which permits laneway suites, garden suites, detached houses, semi-detached, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes.
- **Residential Townhouse (RT) Zone** which permits laneway suites, garden suites, townhouses, as well as detached, semi-detached homes, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes.
- **Residential Multiple (RM) Zone** which permits laneway suites, garden suites, detached houses, semi-detached houses, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and apartment buildings.

All the above zones are found in Ward 23 except for the R Zone.

The residential zones include standard regulations such as permitted uses, building types, permitted maximum number of dwelling units, lot size, floor space index, lot coverage, and a range of built-form standards that include height, setbacks, building depth, building length, and soft landscaping. The residential zones permit up to four-unit multiplexes, subject to achieving certain form-based performance standards; establishes minimum building heights of 10 metres where other residential building types may be permitted lower heights; and exempts multiplexes from the maximum floor space index (FSI) requirement.

The EHON initiative intends to equitably distribute housing options across the city, prioritizing built form-based permissions for residential buildings rather than distinguishing between zones based on building type, and expanding permissions for a wide variety of building types to all neighbourhoods. The Ward 23 Multiplex Study supports this effort by continuing to broaden the range of housing options permitted within Ward 23.

## **WARD 23 MULTIPLEX STUDY BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW**

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The Ward 23 Multiplex Study is an extension of the City-wide Multiplex Study that resulted in as-of-right permissions for multiplexes with up to four units. This Study was scoped to build on previous research and further explore the opportunity to permit more

units and a greater building depth and building length than is otherwise permitted, on an area specific basis.

## Work Program

The Ward 23 Multiplex Study consisted of the following inputs, analysis and engagement:

- A confirmation of the existing as-of-right zoning permissions in Ward 23, including multiplexes;
- A jurisdictional scan of multiplex permissions in other cities;
- A multi-phased case study analysis undertaken with ReHousing to undertake built form testing for six units in Ward 23;
- A review of development applications submitted for multiplexes;
- Community consultation with Ward 23 residents; and
- Engagement with industry professionals.

The key findings of the above streams of work were analyzed and informed the recommended Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments. The study also identified additional implementation challenges to realizing the housing outcomes authorized by the recommended amendments. These challenges, largely related to financial feasibility, are commented on in greater detail in this report.

## STUDY INPUTS

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### Existing Multiplex Permissions – Building Length and Depth

Staff examined shallow lots in more detail to determine if there is an opportunity to create a uniform standard for a 19-metre building depth for multiplexes. Although Council directed staff to only explore building depth, staff extended the analysis to include the building depth and building length provisions as they complement one another and should both be examined as part of the study.

The current multiplex performance standards include maximum building length and maximum building depth, proportionate to the existing lot dimensions. For example, on shallow lots in the RD Zone with a lot frontage of 18 metres or less, the maximum permitted building length for a multiplex is 17 metres, whereas on a deep lot, the maximum permitted building length is 19 metres. With respect to building depth, the zoning by-law permits a maximum 19-metre building depth on a deep lot and does not regulate shallow lots. According to Zoning By-law 569-2013:

- **Building Length** is defined as the horizontal distance between the portion of the front main wall of a building on a lot closest to the front lot line, and the portion of the rear main wall of the building closest to the rear lot line, measured along the lot centreline. If the main walls are not intersected by the lot centreline, the measurement is from the point on the lot centreline where a line drawn perpendicular to the lot centreline connects with the main wall.

- **Building Depth** is defined as the horizontal distance between the front yard setback required on a lot and the portion of the building's rear main wall furthest from the required front yard setback, measured along a line that is perpendicular to the front yard setback line.
- **Shallow lots** are identified as:
  - lots with a depth of less than 36.0 metres and a lot frontage of less than 10.0 metres; or
  - lots with a depth of less than 40.0 metres or greater and a lot frontage of 10.0 metres or greater.
- **Deep lots** are identified as:
  - lots with a depth of 36.0 metres or greater and a lot frontage of less than 10.0 metres; or
  - lots with a depth of 40.0 metres or greater and a lot frontage of 10.0 metres or greater.

See Attachments 10 to 13 for further description of the terms noted above.

Upon review, staff have determined that only the building length provision limits the overall size of the building, as the existing building depth provision does not regulate the development of shallow lots. As such, this study examined the opportunity of permitting a 19-metre building length on shallow lots.

### Precedent Cities Research

As part of the City-wide Multiplex Study, a jurisdictional review was conducted to examine other cities that have adopted regulations for low-rise multi-unit residential buildings with permissions for greater than four units. This review builds on previous research and is summarized below.

City	Definition	Maximum # of Units
Oshawa	<p><b>Fiveplex</b> means an apartment building containing only 5 dwelling units.</p> <p><b>Sixplex</b> means an apartment building containing only 6 dwelling units.</p>	6 units

City	Definition	Maximum # of Units
Ottawa	<p><b>Low Rise Apartment Dwelling</b> means a residential use building that is four or fewer storeys in height and contains four or more principal dwelling units, other than a townhouse dwelling or stacked dwelling.</p>	<p>8 units or 12 units (requires a minimum 15 metre lot frontage and 450 square metres lot area)</p>
Edmonton	<p><b>Residential</b> means a development where a building or part of a building is designed for people to live in. The building contains 1 or more Dwellings or 1 or more Sleeping Units.</p> <p>This includes: Backyard Housing, Duplex Housing, Lodging Houses, Multi-unit Housing, Row Housing, Secondary Suites, Semi-detached Housing, Single Detached Housing, and Supportive Housing.</p>	<p>8 units (only on interior lots)</p>
Victoria	<p><b>Houseplex</b> means a building having no less than three and no more than six self-contained dwelling units, with at least half of the total dwelling units having direct access to the outside for ingress and egress, and does not include a corner townhouse.</p>	<p>6 units</p>
Vancouver	<p><b>Multiple Dwellings</b> means any or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Apartment;</li> <li>(b) Townhouse;</li> <li>(c) Triplex.</li> </ul>	<p>6 units or 8 units (only for secured rental housing)</p>

## Case Studies

Staff worked with ReHousing, a non-profit organization comprised of several groups including the University of Toronto, to determine if six-unit multiplexes could be developed on a typical residential lot within Ward 23. The research was conducted in three phases.

In **Phase 1**, ReHousing surveyed Ward 23 for parcels under RD, RS and RT zoning regulations, excluding corner lots, and identified approximately 16,107 parcels. Corner lot and lots zoned RM were excluded from this count as these lots would be typically larger in area and would otherwise be able to accommodate a sixplex. Using the lot data, ReHousing prepared a catalogue of high-level sixplex designs based on a range of minimum parcel dimensions and were used to develop the case studies discussed in Phase 2 below.

Since parking accommodation can occupy valuable space on the lot and potentially within the home, it is a critical factor that can influence the design of a multiplex. As such, the mapping study focused on two parking scenarios: parking integrated into the principal dwelling and rear surface parking parallel to the driveway.

In **Phase 2**, three typical building case studies were established. Each case study addressed different site conditions, internal unit configurations, and parking arrangements as described below. Each model also incorporated design assumptions such as: providing for at least one 2-bedroom unit located on the ground floor (where possible); two parking spaces, if parking is incorporated into the design; a 1.2-metre minimum side yard setback for accessible entry and improved window access for light and ventilation. Also, each concept was proposed on a shallow lot to better analyze the impacts of extending the building length to 19 metres, which is currently not permitted for a multiplex of up to four units.

The case studies were:

- **Case Study 1:** A larger lot with the widest frontage, featuring integrated parking within the building. This concept included two larger dwelling units with a minimum size of 80 square metres, and an average unit size of approximately 70 square metres for each unit. This concept could accommodate the sixplex and generally complied with the Zoning By-law, without exceeding the permitted building length of 17 metres.
- **Case Study 2:** A lot with a medium-sized frontage with two parking spaces provided at the rear of the building. This concept included one larger dwelling unit with a minimum size of 107 square metres, and an average unit size of approximately 50 square metres for each unit. This concept could accommodate the sixplex and generally complies with the Zoning By-law, without exceeding the permitted building length of 17 metres.
- **Case Study 3:** A lot with the narrowest frontage, which are lots commonly occupied by semi-detached dwellings. This concept did not provide any parking and included one larger dwelling unit of 135 square metres, with an average unit size of approximately 61 square metres for each unit. While the concept required

a building length of 19 metres, this lot was only 0.2 metres short of being identified as a deep lot, where a 19-metre building depth and length are permitted as-of-right.

Refer to Attachments 7 to 9 for each case study's site plans and elevations.

In **Phase 3**, the mapping study and framework established in Phase 1 were revisited to incorporate insights gained from Phase 2. The findings indicated that approximately 6,629 lots, or 41 percent of the residential lots in Ward 23, could accommodate a sixplex with two parking spaces provided with the same performance standards as a four-unit multiplex. This number could increase to approximately 9,886 lots, or 61 percent if no parking spaces are provided. The number of lots that can accommodate a multiplex could further increase if additional building designs (beyond those prepared in Phase 1 and 2) are considered, the number of units within the residential building was reduced from six, and if corner lots and lots zoned RM are taken into consideration.

The study also examined the impacts of extending the building length for all multiplex developments to a maximum of 19 metres. The findings are summarized below:

- a sixplex generally does not require a building length of 19 metres to be constructed on a shallow lot in compliance with the city-wide Zoning By-law;
- deep lots with a building length of 19 metres are typically required to build a sixplex on a smaller sized lot, similar to Case Study Three;
- by increasing the maximum building length to 19 metres for shallow lots, an additional 450, or 3 percent of lots would be able to accommodate a sixplex;
- extending the building length would create opportunities for larger units within the building and more flexibility in unit configuration; and
- if the building length regulation is amended to permit a maximum of 19 metres, other zoning performance standards may not comply such as maximum lot coverage and minimum rear yard setbacks. The standards together help to ensure that there is space to accommodate outdoor amenity areas, soft landscaping and trees.

## **Application Tracking**

As part of the ongoing city-wide multiplex monitoring work program, staff on the monitoring team are undertaking an analysis of multiplex building permits and minor variance applications. The information presented below is based on the findings identified as of the date of this report. Also, the numbers are approximate, and a more comprehensive review of multiplex permits applied for and issued city-wide will be made available through the Multiplex Monitoring program report back to Council in the summer of 2025.

From May 2023 to March 2024, approximately 311 multiplex building permit applications were submitted across the city, 119 of which have been issued. This includes 115 duplexes, 119 triplexes, and 77 fourplexes. From all the permits that have been submitted, three permits have been applied for in Ward 23, two for duplexes and another for a triplex.

Staff have also analyzed variance applications submitted across the city between May 2023 and June 2024. A total of 54 applications involving multiplex-type dwellings were submitted city-wide, which included new developments as well as alterations and additions resulting in additional residential units. Of these, 17 applications were located in Scarborough District, but none were located in Ward 23. Staff have separated the statistics into Scarborough wards and the remaining city wards for analysis purposes. A summary of the analysis can be found below. This analysis below excludes applications tied to the R and RM zones to better align with the Ward 23 Multiplex Study.

### Scarborough District

Since there are no variance applications for multiplex development submitted within Ward 23, the 17 applications submitted throughout the Scarborough District were examined. Based on these 17 applications, staff have made the following observations:

- no building length greater than the as-of-right permission of 17 metres was proposed in order to construct a multiplex on a shallow lot;
- no minor variance applications were submitted to permit a building length greater than 19 metres;
- shallow lots with a frontage of less than 10 metres or a lot depth of less than 36 metres more commonly required a lot coverage variance; and,
- deep lots could generally support building lengths between 17 metres and 19 metres without requiring minor variances for other zoning standards such as lot depth, rear yard setback and rear yard soft landscaping.

### Other City Districts

In other parts of the city, 27 variance applications were submitted and examined. Based on these 27 applications, staff have made the following observations:

- five shallow lot applications requested a building length greater than the permitted 17 metres;
- five applications proposed a building length of greater than 19 metres;
- where an application proposed a building length greater than 17 metres, it typically also required a variance for lot coverage; and,
- shallow lots with a lot depth of under 36 metres were likely to trigger a request for a lot coverage variance.

### Key Findings

Based on staff's review of the building permit and variance applications, the following key observations have been made:

- in less than a year there have been over 300 building permit applications submitted for multiplexes, demonstrating that there is an interest in property owners constructing multiplexes;
- there is a relative balance in the types of multiplex applications submitted (i.e. duplex, triplex, fourplex);



- in Scarborough, multiplexes are being built in compliance with the as-of-right building length and building depth regulations;
- where a shallow lot application proposed a building length greater than 17 metres, it typically also required a variance for lot coverage; and,
- the most frequently requested variances related to lot coverage, rear yard soft landscaping, rear yard setbacks, and building length.

## **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT**

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To effectively solicit feedback from an array of stakeholders on the Ward 23 Multiplex Study, staff used various engagement strategies. A dedicated webpage was created on the City of Toronto website to provide information on the study, and how to obtain more information ([www.toronto.ca/Ward23Multiplex](http://www.toronto.ca/Ward23Multiplex)). To advertise the public consultation meeting, postcards were delivered to each property in Ward 23, and advertised on the City's social media platforms, as well as in the Ward Councillor's newsletters. A consultation meeting in collaboration with the Ward Councillor's office was also arranged with local stakeholders in the housing and development sector.

### Community Consultation Meeting

An in-person community consultation meeting was hosted by staff on October 3, 2024. Approximately 100 people attended, along with the Ward Councillor. In addition to the presentation by staff, a question and answer period, as well as an open house session were held. The following comments were raised in the meeting, and via phone calls or e-mails to staff:

- support for the multiplex project and suggestions to increase the number of units beyond six;
- support for allowing sixplexes in other wards and/or city-wide;
- support for the multiplex project as it can provide support for homeowners in making mortgage payments;
- support for multiplexes as they allow seniors to age in place and support multi-generational families living together;
- concerns with the massing of the multiplexes, noting potential shadowing impacts to neighbouring properties and overall 'fit' with the surrounding neighbourhood;
- concerns about the responsibility of property maintenance and if appropriate fines would be given if a property was not maintained to city standards;
- concerns with resulting unit sizes being too small to accommodate families;
- concerns about resulting excess vehicular on- and off-street parking demand;
- concerns for city operations such as snow plowing and garbage collection as a result of on-street parking;
- concerns about potential impacts on property values and property tax;

- concerns about existing development charges and parkland levies being financial barriers to construction;
- concerns about the existing infrastructure being able to support the intensification prompted by multiplexes and a comment suggesting that infrastructure be upgraded first to support new density;
- comments formally opposing multiplexes with up to six units;
- comments about impacts on existing neighbourhood services such as daycares and medical offices;
- comments that multiplexes with up to six units will create new opportunities for CMHC funding;
- comment suggesting multiplexes be permitted in new subdivisions rather than existing neighbourhoods;
- question on potential occupancy limit regulations in the zoning by-law;
- questions about CMHC funding programs for multiplexes; and,
- questions about requiring multiplexes to contain affordable units.

### Survey

A survey was also provided to the attendees of the community consultation meeting. A total of 45 surveys were completed and the results indicated that almost half of the respondents supported amending the current by-law to permit up to six-unit multiplexes in Ward 23, while less than half supported allowing a building length to a maximum of 19 metres.

### Virtual Consultation Meeting with Industry Professionals

On September 30, 2024, a virtual consultation meeting was held by staff with industry professionals to discuss multiplex housing. The following comments were raised in relation to the current multiplex provisions and how they could be improved to permit six units:

- unanimous support for six-unit multiplexes;
- support to increase building length to 19 metres or greater;
- the minor variance process discourages applicants from building multiplexes;
- the current development charges and parkland levies are significant financial barriers to the construction of multiplexes;
- concerns in relation to the existing prevailing by-law provisions in Chapter 900 of Zoning By-law 569-2013, which override the standards of the multiplex by-law, and the proposed sixplex provisions in Ward 23;
- comments that the zoning by-law provisions for multiplexes should be further simplified to be less restrictive and easier to apply;

- the conversion of an existing garage into a living space requires applicants to remove driveways in the front yard which, in turn, removes driveways for vehicle parking;
- the need to increase the permitted maximum building height for multiplexes above 10 metres; and,
- identification of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) funding as a valuable program when constructing a rental-tenured multiplex.

The issues raised through the community consultation and engagement process have been considered as part of the study and commented on as necessary in the body of this report.

## COMMENTS

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### Recommended Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments

This report recommends Council adopt an Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment to permit up to six units within a multiplex in Ward 23 – Scarborough North. Staff found the proposed increase of two additional dwelling units within a multiplex to be a balanced and incremental increase that could help address the challenges identified in the subsections below, while encouraging gentle intensification. However, it is recommended that the existing performance standards set out for building length (and all multiplex zoning standards) in the city-wide Zoning By-law be maintained. The multiplex monitoring team is bringing forward a report in the summer of 2025 that outlines their key findings, any potential changes to the multiplex performance standards will be made through this report.

The proposed amendments are consistent with the PPS 2024 and advance the intent of the Official Plan related to multiplex permissions in *Neighbourhoods* as detailed below. The proposed increase in multiplex permissions would also introduce a new low-rise housing option within Ward 23, creating more opportunities for equitable access to small-scale, ground-related housing that meets the needs of both current and future residents. The proposed amendments will also lay the foundations for future city-wide multiplex considerations through the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) work program.

The discussion in the subsections below focuses on subject matter that was previously not discussed or where new updates and observations have been made from the City-wide Multiplex Study. The City-wide Multiplex Study Report can be found here:

[Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods: Multiplex Study - Final Report \(toronto.ca\)](#)

### Permitted Building Type - Fiveplex and Sixplex

The City of Toronto is serviced by substantial infrastructure, including existing and planned rapid transit, which underpins a growth management strategy focused largely on *Mixed Use Areas*, *Apartment Neighbourhoods* and *Employment Areas*, but also benefits lands designated *Neighbourhoods*. Some *Neighbourhoods* within the City, including Ward 23, face challenges such as declining populations, which in turn, limits

the support for local retail establishments and services. As such, staff found the proposed increase of two additional dwelling units within a multiplex to be a balanced and incremental increase that could help address these challenges, while encouraging gentle intensification. The proposed increase in multiplex permissions would also introduce a new low-rise housing option within Ward 23, creating more opportunities for equitable access to small-scale, ground-related housing that meets the needs of both current and future residents.

The findings of the case study analysis provide further support for increasing the multiplex permissions to six units within Ward 23. The three case studies were created with varying lot sizes, unit layouts, and parking configurations and demonstrated that a six-unit multiplex could be built on a lot using the existing multiplex performance standards. Each case study respected and reinforced the prevailing heights, massing, scale, density, and landscape patterns of nearby residential properties. Within each of these models, there was potential for a minimum of at least one family-size unit and the buildings were generally in compliance with the existing multiplex performance standards.

The existing lot fabric within Ward 23 allows approximately 61 percent of the residential lots to accommodate a sixplex similar to those demonstrated by the case study models. This percentage could increase if a sixplex design, different from those prepared as part of this study, is proposed, the number of dwelling units within the multiplex is reduced (i.e. to five), and corner lots and lots in the RM Zone are considered.

The Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments propose to permit fiveplexes and sixplexes on lots zoned RD (Residential Detached), RS (Residential Semi-Detached), RT (Residential Townhouse), and RM (Residential Multiple) in Ward 23. This includes the permission to create a new building with up to six dwelling units, and the ability to convert an existing detached house to have up to six dwelling units and maintain the built form of the existing detached house. The ability to convert an existing detached house allows for easier creation of additional units, reducing the need for minor variances related to built form which may be associated with the new multiplex building types. This building conversion permission aims to reduce process barriers for building multiplexes, enabling homeowner-led construction and renovation, while encouraging the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, which has environmental benefits. Furthermore, the ZBLA intends to maintain the existing performance standards for multiplexes with four units. No change to the existing building depth or other performance standards, such as building length or height is proposed.

The use permission in the Zoning By-law Amendment will be limited to prevent the conversion of semi-detached dwellings and townhouses into a fiveplex and sixplex. Although Case Study 3 demonstrates that a semi-detached dwelling could accommodate a sixplex, staff have recently identified implementation concerns when converting a multi-unit building to include additional dwelling units, particularly when both sides of semi-detached house are converted to a multiplex. An example would be the classification of the building typology, which is further discussed in the Future Work section of the report. Staff note that semi-detached dwellings and townhouses in this study area are not a prevalent building type and represents a small proportion city-wide, and will address these concerns and bring forward any necessary amendments as part

of the city-wide sixplex study, which will be brought forward to Council in the fourth quarter of 2025.

Staff are of the opinion that there is room within the low-scale built form of *Neighbourhoods* to achieve a better balance between local physical character and incremental growth. The introduction of a more intensive built form could help to attract new residents, allow multi-generational families to age in place, stabilize declining populations, make better use of existing and planned infrastructure, and support local retail establishments and services. Furthermore, by preserving the existing performance standards, the case study analysis demonstrates that the physical pattern of the neighbourhood – both existing and planned – is respected and reinforced. The proposed Official Plan Amendment would be consistent with the policies in the Provincial Planning Statement and would maintain the general intent of the Official Plan which aim to distribute opportunities for new housing supply to all neighbourhoods and to ensure that they include a mix of housing types and affordability. The proposed ZBLA would conform to the Official Plan as it would allow for the development of fiveplexes and sixplexes, which would increase the range of housing in Ward 23, while ensuring the built form “fits” with the existing physical character in the neighbourhood.

### **Performance Standards - Building Length**

In accordance with the Council direction, the Ward 23 Multiplex Study included a detailed analysis examining the potential for extending building length on shallow lots to 19 metres, from the existing maximum 17-metre zoning permission. The building length and building depth regulations are intended to ensure that buildings are of an appropriate scale for residential areas, provide adequate light penetration to residential windows, and prevent undue impacts on the rear yard amenity of adjacent properties. These provisions also complement other regulations designed to ensure sufficient opportunity to provide open space, soft landscaping, and trees on a lot.

Each of the case studies applied a shallow lot configuration so that a 19-metre building length provision could be tested. Ultimately, the case studies identified that a building length of 19 metres was generally not a limiting factor in permitting an as-of-right six-unit multiplex. The case studies also examined the potential benefits of extending the building length to 19 metres, which included creating opportunities for larger units within the building and greater flexibility in unit configuration. However, by increasing the building length while maintaining existing performance standards such as maximum lot coverage and minimum rear yard setback, the research also found that there will be circumstances where it is not possible to achieve adequate open space on a lot and insufficient room for soft landscaping and trees.

Although extending the building length can have benefits from a construction and financial feasibility perspective, the additional building length could also create other zoning non-compliance, impacting open space and landscaping on a lot, which may not conform to the Official Plan policies. The Official Plan provides that development in established *Neighbourhoods* will respect and reinforce the existing physical character of each geographic neighbourhood. This includes prevailing patterns of rear and side yard setbacks and landscaped open space, and the continuation of special landscape or built-form features that contribute to the unique physical character of the geographic

neighbourhood. Should a proposal seek to extend building length, there is an opportunity to do so through the minor variance process, where on a case-by-case basis, there will be an evaluation of whether doing so would maintain the intent and purpose of the above-noted Official Plan policies.

Based on the analysis above, and recognizing that the city-wide multiplex monitoring team is examining multiplex performance standards in more detail as new applications continue to be submitted, staff recommend maintaining the existing performance standards set out for regulating building length for multiplexes in the city-wide Zoning By-law. The multiplex monitoring team will bring forward a report with their findings in the summer of 2025. Any potential changes to the multiplex performance standards will be made through this report.

## **Parking Requirements**

Parking was frequently raised through the consultation process. The current multiplex provisions do not have minimum or maximum parking standards. There is no requirement for parking in Toronto's neighbourhoods, and it remains up to individual property owners to determine how much parking to provide on-site while meeting other zoning standards. Staff continue to take the position that the provision of parking will be demand-driven, with units being offered with or without parking on-site.

The need for parking to support the construction of additional units was a concern raised by stakeholders. Numerous stakeholders identified excess parking demand on and off the streets as a major concern for road maintenance in the winter, garbage collection, pedestrian safety, and maintaining the overall character of the neighbourhood. Staff acknowledge this concern and are further examining it as part of the city-wide multiplex monitoring program. The monitoring program will track parking-related data on incoming developments, such as the number of spaces provided and whether variances are requested to accommodate increased parking areas on-site. The monitoring team will report on their findings in the summer of 2025.

Further work will be undertaken by Transportation Services through the Strategic Parking Framework, which they will be bringing forward for Council's consideration in the spring of 2025. The Framework will recommend actions to support the City in creating a city-wide parking strategy and includes future work on a comprehensive review of residential parking for both the permit parking and front yard parking programs.

Until such time as the multiplex monitoring team has reported their findings, staff recommend that the existing parking regulations be maintained. It is important to balance the need for on-site parking while limiting the barriers to the development of multiplexes through the introduction of any on-site new vehicular or bicycle parking requirements. Staff are recommending a new policy in the site and area specific policy that encourages multiplexes to provide on-site parking accommodation for active modes of transportation, such as bicycles. This proposed policy is generally consistent with the Official Plan and the goals set out by Council to better manage auto-dependency and achieve Council's target for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040.

## Definition of ‘Soft Landscaping’ in the Zoning By-law

The permission for sixplexes on lots may increase the demand for outdoor spaces and the need for occupiable hardscape, which may be difficult to provide due to the existing definition of “soft landscaping” in the Zoning By-law. One potential solution considered in this study is broadening the definition. Currently soft landscaping is defined as *“landscaping excluding hard-surfaced areas such as decorative stonework, retaining walls, walkways, or other hard-surfaced landscape-architectural elements”*. The updated definition would consider including elements such as permeable pavers, gravel, and other similar permeable hardscape finishes, and green roofs.

The soft landscaping definition is being reviewed by staff through various ongoing initiatives such as the EHON Growing Space report, which is scheduled to be presented to the Planning and Housing Committee in the spring of 2025. As such, no changes are currently being proposed.

## Affordability

Through the community engagement process, staff were asked whether new multiplexes could be required to provide affordable dwelling units. The EHON initiative is primarily a market housing initiative, focusing on the expansion of mostly rental housing options, in a range of formats, within the City’s neighbourhoods. EHON initiatives represent one portion of the City’s Housing Action Plan, which also includes a range of efforts to address housing access and affordability in Toronto. While the multiplex recommendations are not intended to directly create affordable rental housing, they will facilitate the development of housing forms available to a wider spectrum of incomes and household compositions at various life stages, compared to the existing housing stock in many low-rise communities. Households without the means to purchase or rent a full single-detached home may still be able to access a smaller unit within the same neighbourhood. Multiplex units could also support intergenerational living, with for example, a separate unit created to support aging in place or extended families.

There are various City, provincial, federal programs available to support the creation of affordable housing in partnership with non-profit and private sector proponents. For example, through “EX18.2 - Build More Homes: Expanding Incentives for Purpose Built Rental Housing” report, Council adopted amendments to eligibility criteria of the Rental Housing Supply Program (RHSP) that will support EHON and other small scale projects with 10 units or less by removing the eligibility requirement related to the minimum percentage of affordable rental homes required to receive City incentives. With this change, any unit that meets the RHSP program criteria for affordable rental homes (e.g. depth and duration of affordability) will be eligible for incentives including waiver of planning application fees and building permit fees, and exemption from property taxes. By meeting the RHSP affordable rents, which are aligned with the provincial definition of affordable rents under the Development Charges Act, these affordable rental homes will be exempt from paying development charges, Community Benefit Charges, and parkland dedication fees.

This responds to previous Council direction to City Planning and Housing Secretariat, to report to Council on the feasibility of a program that incentivizes owners of multiplexes to make one of the four units affordable to rent or purchase.

The as-of-right permissions for fiveplexes and sixplexes could also create new opportunities for applicants to apply for CMHC financing. The current CMHC application requirements include that a minimum of five units be proposed on a lot with a points-based criteria that includes affordability. By permitting up to six-unit multiplexes in Ward 23, applicants would be eligible to apply for grants and low-interest loans that could be used to build multiplexes with secured affordable housing. As part of its 2024 fall economic statement, the federal government announced plans to help homeowners add secondary suites to existing homes through a number of measures under the “Canada Secondary Suite Loan Program”, including doubling the loan limit from \$40,000 to \$80,000 starting in early 2025.

## **FUTURE WORK**

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### **Monitoring Program**

Recommendations 4 and 6 of this report direct staff to undertake a program to monitor the uptake and implementation of five- and six-unit multiplex projects in Ward 23, following the adoption of the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments. The program will monitor the number of applications for multiplexes, the number and type of net new units achieved, the purchase and sale of multiplexes or rental prices, the number and type of minor variances requested for multiplexes, and tree retention and compensation. The monitoring period is proposed to extend from the time of adoption to December 2027, with a report back to the Planning and Housing Committee on findings and recommendations in the second quarter of 2028. Recognizing that new six-unit multiplex permissions may be introduced city-wide within the next year, staff are recommending a slightly longer monitoring period than typically suggested. This will allow five- and six-unit multiplex developments to be monitored on a city-wide basis.

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

While the general objective of the city-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013 is to provide harmonized regulations on a zone and city-wide basis (as set out in Chapters 5 to 800 of the Zoning By-law), the Zoning By-law also includes exceptions with prevailing by-laws and prevailing sections from former municipal zoning by-laws in Chapter 900.

The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment includes regulations to clarify that a fiveplex and sixplex are permitted uses despite any prevailing by-laws or prevailing sections in Chapter 900 of Zoning By-law 569-2013. However, there are site-specific exceptions that include more restrictive performance standards in prevailing by-laws and sections under Chapter 900 that create barriers for the development of multiplexes. For example, the permitted maximum floor space index (FSI) under Chapter 10 for Residential zones does not apply to multiplexes, however, there are Chapter 900 exceptions that prevail over Chapter 10 regarding maximum FSI. As such, these exceptions could trigger the need for multiplex proposals to meet site-specific FSI requirements. In this circumstance, a minor variance could be required before a building permit application



can be issued, which may increase cost, timing and uncertainty of multiplex projects. Similar to smaller scale multiplexes, the performance standards found in the exceptions in Chapter 900 would also continue to apply to fiveplexes and sixplexes. This matter has been identified previously by staff, is part of the City Planning Division's work program, and will be the subject of a report to Council in the fourth quarter of 2025.

### **Examining Built Form: Semi-Detached Multiplexes Versus Apartments**

The City has recently received applications for semi-detached fourplexes which seek to construct four new units on each side of a semi-detached dwelling, for a total of eight dwelling units in one building. Under the existing multiplex zoning provisions in Chapter 10 of the city-wide Zoning By-law, only an existing semi-detached building can be converted to contain up to four units on each side of the lot, provided certain regulations are met. Since these recent applications are not proposing a conversion, the buildings are being classified as new apartment buildings.

On November 13, 2024, Council adopted a recommendation to direct staff, as part of the multiplex monitoring program, to clarify multiplex permissions in relation to semi-detached residential buildings and report back with any potential zoning by-law amendments in the second quarter of 2025 ([PH16.13](#)).

### **Financial Feasibility**

An important consideration concerning multiplexes pertains to potential financial feasibility and the need for financial incentives to enable the development of multiplexes. For a real estate development project to proceed, developers must examine multiple factors such as financial considerations, market dynamics, and investment risks. There must be demand, and the project must make sense from a financial perspective.

Multiplexes, whether newly built or converted from an existing structure, are subject to municipal fees and charges such as Development Charges (DC), Parkland Dedication requirements, planning and permit application fees, as well as education development charges imposed by the School Board. If a multiplex proposal requires a minor variance, then it will be subject to an application fee to the Committee of Adjustment. If the multiplex development is intended to be a condominium, it will be further subject to a Draft Plan of Condominium application fee. With the introduction of up to four-unit multiplexes city-wide, many of the fees described above are currently under review or have already been recently modified, to better align with the multiplex policy objectives to reduce financial barriers for the construction of these housing types.

As part of the City-wide Multiplex approval, Council directed staff to review planning application fees through a Development Application Fee Review. Staff will present their development application fee review findings at the Planning and Housing Committee in the first quarter of 2025. The report proposes changes to the minor variance fee category and a new process for the Draft Plan of Condominium applications.

On December 5, 2024, through [PH17.6](#), Planning and Housing Committee adopted additional amendments to clarify parkland dedication exemptions in situations where there are no more than five total residential units on a given parcel of land.

In instances where more than four units are proposed in the primary residential building, Development Charges and Parkland Levies will be required for each dwelling unit, including a fiveplex or sixplex. Through the public consultation process for the Ward 23 Multiplex Study, participants suggested that the current Development Charge and Parkland Levy by-laws disincentivize the creation of low-rise residential buildings with more than four units as they increase the cost and create financial barriers. This view is supported by the Urban Land Institute Toronto report titled *Multiplex Housing Financial Feasibility Exercise*. This report was prepared for the City of Toronto as part of the City-wide Multiplex Study and recommends that Development Charges should be waived for the first four unit(s) and then discounted for any additional unit to encourage development.

The City and Provincial legislation provide numerous targeted reductions to municipal fees and charges to support housing delivery, such as incentives for non-profit housing, long-term care homes, purpose-built rental housing and rent controlled units, DC exemptions for residential buildings proposing up to four units, and fee deferrals for ancillary dwelling units (e.g. garden suites). Affordable units are also potentially eligible for a variety of incentives through existing programs, such as the City's Rental Housing Supply program, which provides DC, CBC, Parkland, permit and planning application fees and property tax exemptions. The province also provides HST exemptions for rental units, and exemptions from municipal growth funding tools, for affordable residential units, subject to an agreement. While all of these incentives have a policy rationale linked to the delivery of housing, every incentive decreases the City's ability to provide a broad range of municipal services supported by DCs and additional or improved parkland for residents promptly and must be considered carefully.

City staff will continue to examine potential financial feasibility and barriers to creating multiplexes. This includes estimating both 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. At this time, a Development Charge by-law review is planned to initiate in early 2025 and will consider financial incentives as they relate to six-unit multiplexes. It is critical that all orders of government need to work together to bring forward solutions that will effectively address financial feasibility concerns as they relate to multiplexes and other housing options.

## **CONCLUSION**

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Building on the city-wide study, the Ward 23 Multiplex Study has undertaken several forms of research, conducted detailed design studies using the Ward 23 context, and considered feedback through various forms of engagement. Through this study process, staff have developed an area specific policy and regulatory framework that would enable the development of multiplexes with up to six units while balancing a range of needs and perspectives. This study sets the foundation for lessons learned to be

applied on a city-wide basis through the City's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) application regarding six units and four storeys in all Neighbourhoods.

While necessary changes to the policy and zoning regime for Ward 23 are being advanced through this report, the study ascertained challenges to the implementation of fiveplexes and sixplexes despite the planning permissions. These issues are unable to be resolved at an area-specific level and instead are one of the follow-on pieces of work to be addressed through the City's efforts moving forward with enhancing multiplex permissions.

The recommended Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments present Council with an opportunity to adopt a more equitable and sustainable approach to growth within Ward 23. These permissions will see lands designated as *Neighbourhoods* realize incremental change while remaining vibrant, and preserving the essential built form and scale to meet the needs of current and future residents. Providing opportunities for gentle intensification will allow more Torontonians the option to enjoy the city's low-rise communities and be an additional housing option to accommodate the growing population over time.

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## **SIGNATURE**

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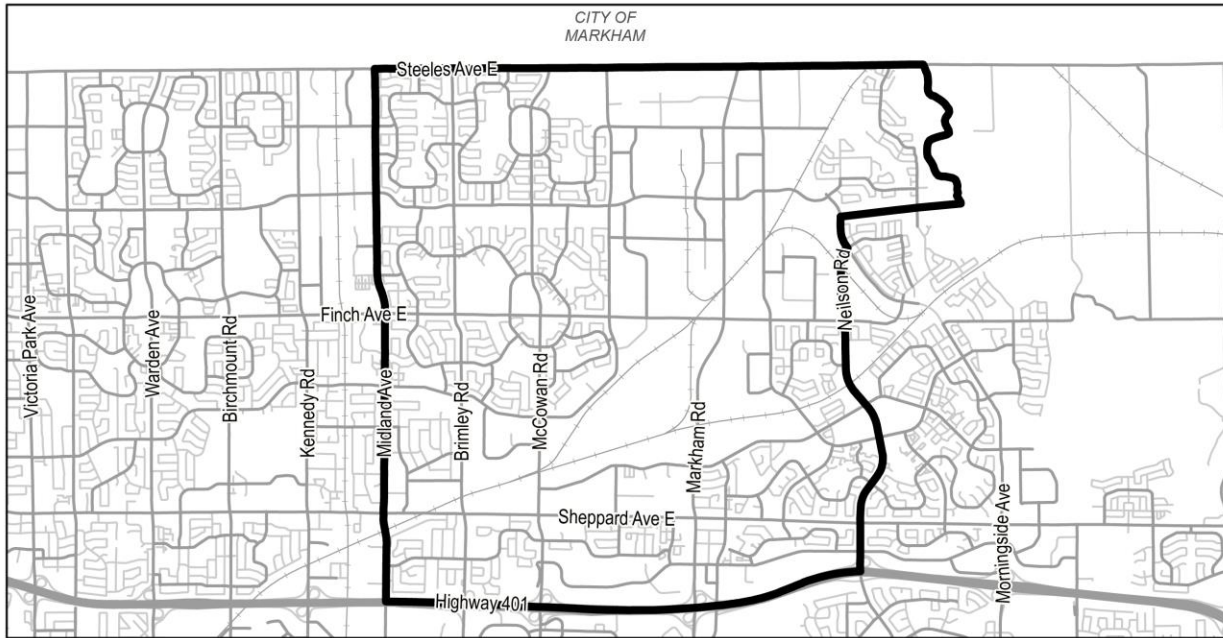
Jason Thorne  
Chief Planner and Executive Director  
City Planning Division

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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- Attachment 1: Location Map
- Attachment 2: Official Plan Land Use Map
- Attachment 3: Site and Area Specific Map
- Attachment 4a: Existing Zoning By-law Map
- Attachment 4b: Existing Residential Zoning By-law Map
- Attachment 5: Draft Official Plan Amendment
- Attachment 6: Draft Zoning By-law Amendment
- Attachment 7a: Case Study One: Site Plan
- Attachment 7b: Case Study One: Elevation
- Attachment 8a: Case Study Two: Site Plan
- Attachment 8b: Case Study Two: Elevation
- Attachment 9a: Case Study Three: Site Plan
- Attachment 9b: Case Study Three: Elevation
- Attachment 10: Building Depth
- Attachment 11: Building Length
- Attachment 12: Shallow Lot
- Attachment 13: Deep Lot

# Attachment 1: Location Map



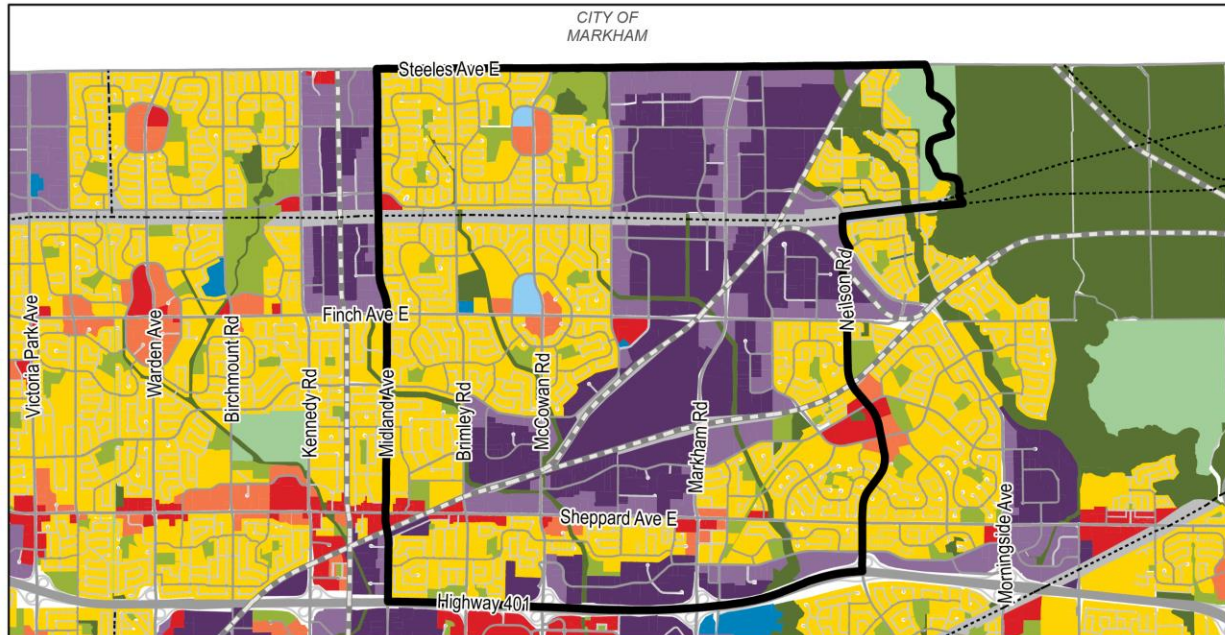
 **TORONTO**  
Attachment 1

Ward 23 Multiplex Study  
Location Map

 Ward 23 Scarborough North

  
Not to Scale  
10/30/2024

# Attachment 2: Official Plan Land Use Map

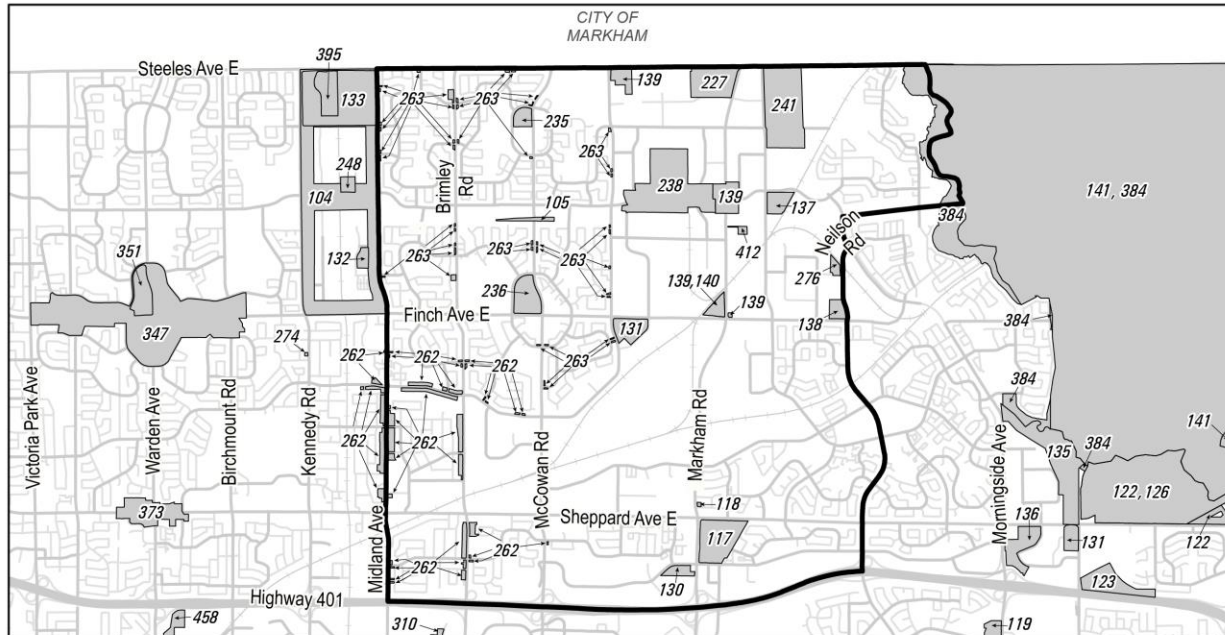


**TORONTO**  
Attachment 2

Ward 23 Multiplex Study  
Official Plan Land Use Map



Ward 23 Scarborough North	Natural Areas	General Employment Areas	Streets and Highways
<b>Land Use Designations</b>	Parks	Core Employment Areas	Rail Corridors
Neighbourhoods	Other Open Space Areas	Utility Corridors	Hydro Corridors
Apartment Neighbourhoods	Institutional Areas	Special Policy Area (See Chapter 7, Site and Area Specific Policies 235, 236)	
Mixed Use Areas			Not to Scale 10/30/2024

# Attachment 3: Site and Area Specific Map



**TORONTO**  
Attachment 3

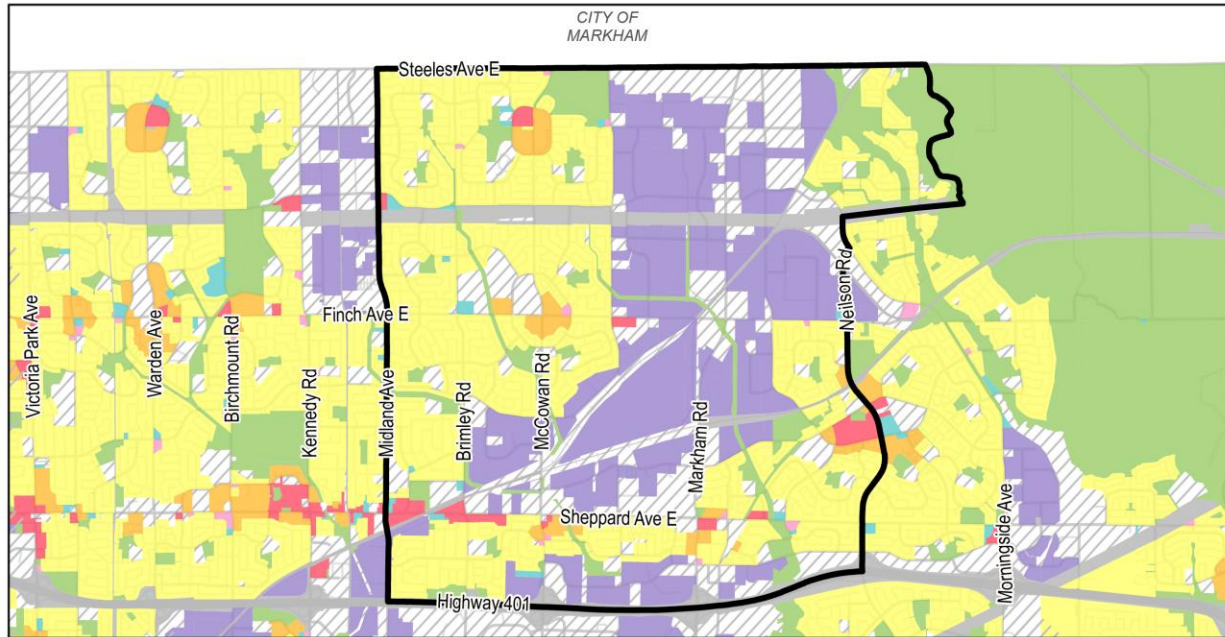
Ward 23 Multiplex Study  
Site and Area Specific Policies Map

-  Ward 23 Scarborough North
-  Areas affected by the Site and Area Specific Policies

Note:  
See Site and Area Specific Policy 826 regarding multiplex permissions for lots designated as Neighbourhoods.

  
Not to Scale  
10/31/2024

# Attachment 4a: Existing Zoning By-law Map



**TORONTO**  
Attachment 4a

Ward 23 Multiplex Study  
Existing Zoning By-law Map

- Ward 23 Scarborough North
- Lands Subject to Former City of Toronto By-law

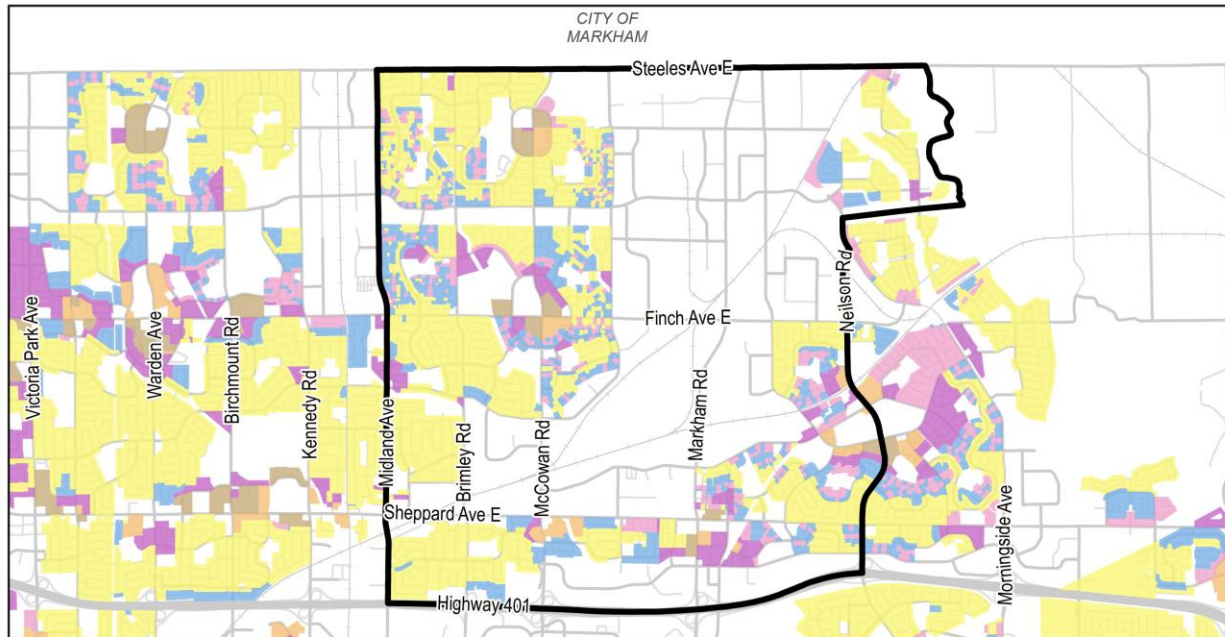
**Zone Categories**

- Residential
- Residential Apartment
- Open Space
- Utility and Transportation
- Commercial
- Commercial Residential
- Commercial Residential Employment
- Employment Industrial
- Institutional

City of Toronto By-law 569-2013  
Not to Scale  
10/31/2024



# Attachment 4b: Existing Residential Zoning By-law Map



**TORONTO**  
Attachment 4b

Ward 23 Multiplex Study  
Existing Residential Zoning By-law Map

Ward 23 Scarborough North

**Residential Zone Categories**

- RA: Residential Apartment
- RAC: Residential Apartment Commercial
- RD: Residential Detached
- RM: Residential Multiple Dwelling
- RS: Residential Semi Detached
- RT: Residential Townhouse

City of Toronto By-law 569-2013  
Not to Scale  
10/31/2024

## Attachment 5: Draft Official Plan Amendment

Authority: Toronto and East York Community Council Item ~ as adopted by City of Toronto Council on ~, 20~

Enacted by Council: ~, 20~

**CITY OF TORONTO  
Bill XXX  
BY-LAW XXX**

**To adopt Amendment No. 762 to the Official Plan for the City of Toronto respecting multiplexes on *Neighbourhoods*-designated lands within the area generally bounded by Steeles Avenue to the north, Nelson Road and Rouge River to the east, Highway 401 to the south, and Midland Avenue to the west.**

WHEREAS authority is given to Council under the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P. 13, as amended, to pass this By-law;

WHEREAS Council of the City of Toronto has provided adequate information to the public and has held at least one public meeting in accordance with the Planning Act;

The Council of the City of Toronto HEREBY ENACTS as follows:

1. The attached Amendment No. 762 to the Official Plan is hereby adopted pursuant to the Planning Act, as amended.

Enacted and Passed this ~ day of ~, A.D. 20~.

Frances Nunziata,  
Speaker

(Seal of the City)

JOHN D. ELVIDGE  
City Clerk

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**AMENDMENT NO.762 TO THE OFFICIAL PLAN**

**NEIGHBOURHOODS-DESIGNATED LANDS WITHIN THE AREA GENERALLY BOUNDED BY STEELES AVENUE TO THE NORTH, NELSON ROAD AND ROUGE RIVER TO THE EAST, HIGHWAY 401 TO THE SOUTH, AND MIDLAND AVENUE TO THE WEST**

---

The Official Plan of the City of Toronto is amended as follows:

1. Chapter 7, Site and Area Specific Policies, is amended by removing all lands designated *Neighbourhoods* within the area bounded by Steeles Avenue to the north, Nelson Road to the east, Highway 401 to the south, and Midland Avenue to the west from Site and Area Specific Policy No. 826.
2. Chapter 7, Site and Area Specific Policies, is amended by adding Site and Area Specific Policy No. 895 for all lands designated *Neighbourhoods* within the area bounded by Steeles Avenue to the north, Nelson Road to the east, Highway 401 to the south, and Midland Avenue to the west, as follows:

**"895. Multiplexes in *Neighbourhoods*.**

Low-rise residential buildings that contain more than one unit make more efficient use of land, and provide more ground-related housing choices for all residents at all stages of their lives, supporting the vitality of the city's *Neighbourhoods*. Multiplexes – residential buildings containing up to six units – can deliver additional dwellings while integrating with the general physical scale and development patterns of the neighbourhood. To accommodate the modest intensification needed to house more people, regulations for multiplexes may differ from single-unit buildings to ensure efficient and livable homes for Toronto's residents.

Despite Policy 4.1.5, multiplexes are permitted in *Neighbourhoods*, subject to the following policies:

- a) For the purposes of this Site and Area Specific Policy, a "multiplex" refers to a duplex, triplex, fourplex, fiveplex, or sixplex.
- b) Development of multiplexes:
  - i. will maintain the low-rise built form of each geographic neighbourhood, including in particular:
    - a) patterns of streets, blocks and lanes, parks and public building sites;

- b) prevailing size and configuration of lots;
  - c) prevailing setbacks of buildings from the street or streets;
  - d) maximizing contiguous soft landscaping within front and rear yard setbacks that is supportive of maintaining and expanding the urban tree canopy;
  - e) conserving heritage properties and heritage conservation districts; and
  - f) special landscape or built-form features of the geographic neighbourhood.
- ii. is encouraged to include large units, and should include at least one unit that contains multiple bedrooms;
  - iii. will provide entrances that are safely accessible from the street, which may be located at the front, side or rear of the building;
  - iv. should not result in the injury or removal of a healthy tree protected under Municipal Code Chapters 608, 658, and 813 on the subject property and adjacent properties;
  - v. is encouraged to salvage and/or reuse existing building materials and/or foundations;
  - vi. is encouraged to provide green roof areas, solar panels, and low carbon building materials, and to ensure any parking spaces are designed to permit future electric vehicle supply equipment;
  - vii. will minimize privacy impacts between adjacent dwelling units;
  - viii. will integrate with existing grades at the property line;
  - x. is encouraged to expand the urban tree canopy through the planting of a new tree on a lot with a multiplex; and
  - xi. is encouraged to include parking spaces for cycling and other active modes of transportation, and should be enclosed within a building or structure.
- c) Where a multiplex incorporates sustainable building features that would result in the loss of floor area, or where it preserves existing trees protected under the Municipal Code on the subject property and adjacent properties, variances from applicable zoning by-law regulations may be authorized if it is demonstrated that they are necessary to accommodate these sustainable design features and/or tree preservation.

## **SIDEBAR - Large units**

- i. The term "large units" in the context of multiplex developments refers to two and three bedroom units. These units are designed to meet the needs of household compositions such as families with children, multi-generational families, seniors with home care or groups of unrelated students and/or adults who choose to live together. The provision of large units will ultimately benefit a diversity of household compositions.

## **SIDEBAR – Sustainable Building Features**

- ii. Sustainable building design, technologies and practices can aid the City in meeting its climate goals. Current examples of sustainable features include increased insulation to provide a high-efficiency building; high-efficiency HVAC equipment; fossil fuel-free heating systems; and eliminating below-grade floor area in new construction to reduce material carbon emissions.

Incorporating sustainable building features may reduce the usable floor area – for example, providing thicker insulation may result in a smaller interior space; or increasing a building's setback to avoid injuring or destroying a protected tree may result in a smaller footprint than would otherwise be permitted. To compensate for this loss of living space in multiplexes, zoning variances such as modest increased height or reduced setbacks may be considered where their impacts are deemed to be minor.

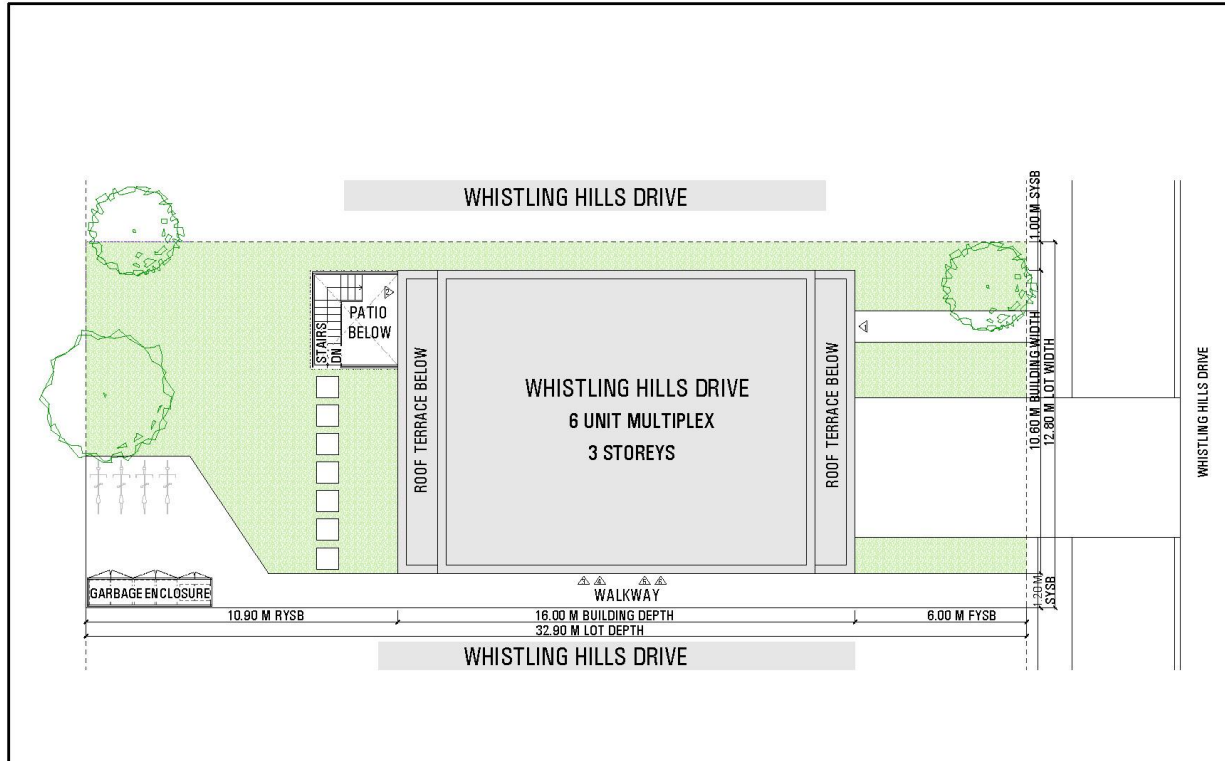
2. Maps 30 and 33, Site and Area Specific Policies (Key Maps) are amended by replacing the existing note " See Site and Area Specific Policy 826 regarding multiplex permissions for lots designated as *Neighbourhoods*." with the following Note:

"See Site and Area Specific Policy 826 and 895 regarding multiplex permissions for lots designated as *Neighbourhoods*."

## **Attachment 6: Draft Zoning By-law Amendment**

(To be available prior to the January 23, 2025, Planning and Housing Committee Meeting)

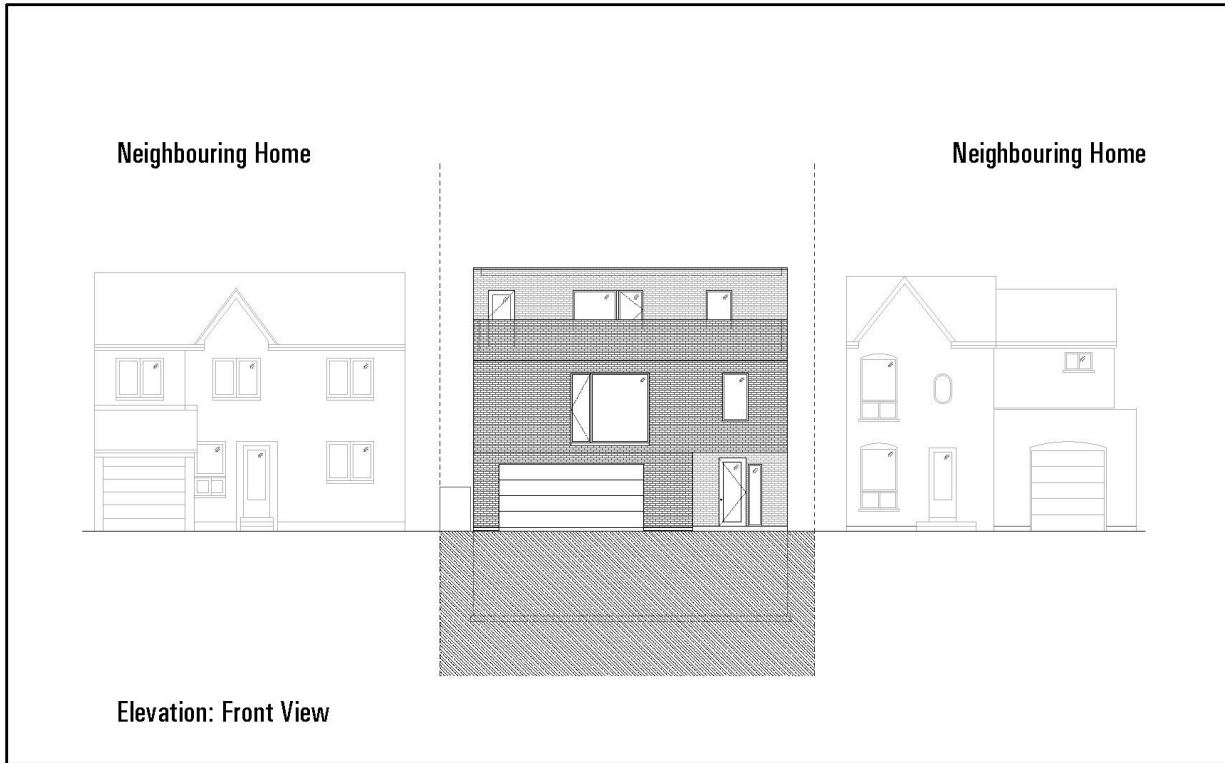
# Attachment 7a: Case Study One: Site Plan



Attachment 7a

Ward 23 Multiplex Study  
Case Study One: Site Plan

**Attachment 7b: Case Study One: Elevation**

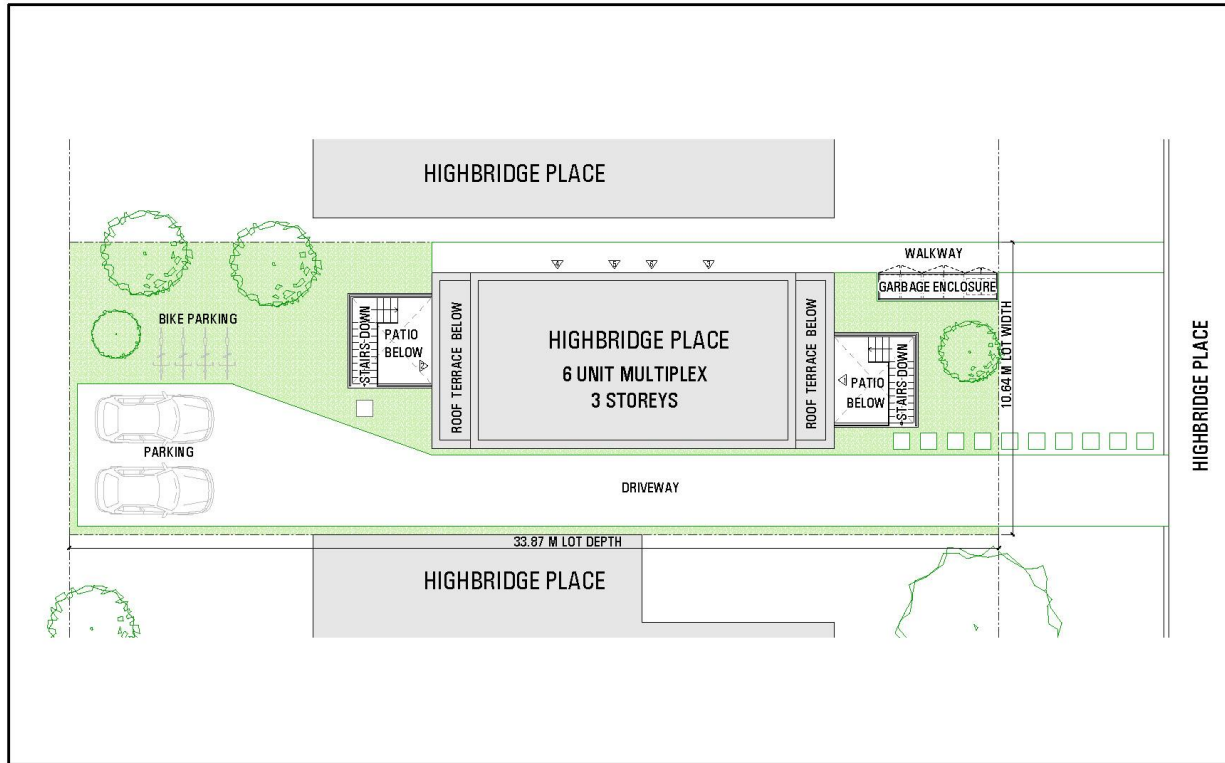


**Attachment 7b**

**Ward 23 Multiplex Study  
Case Study One: Elevation**



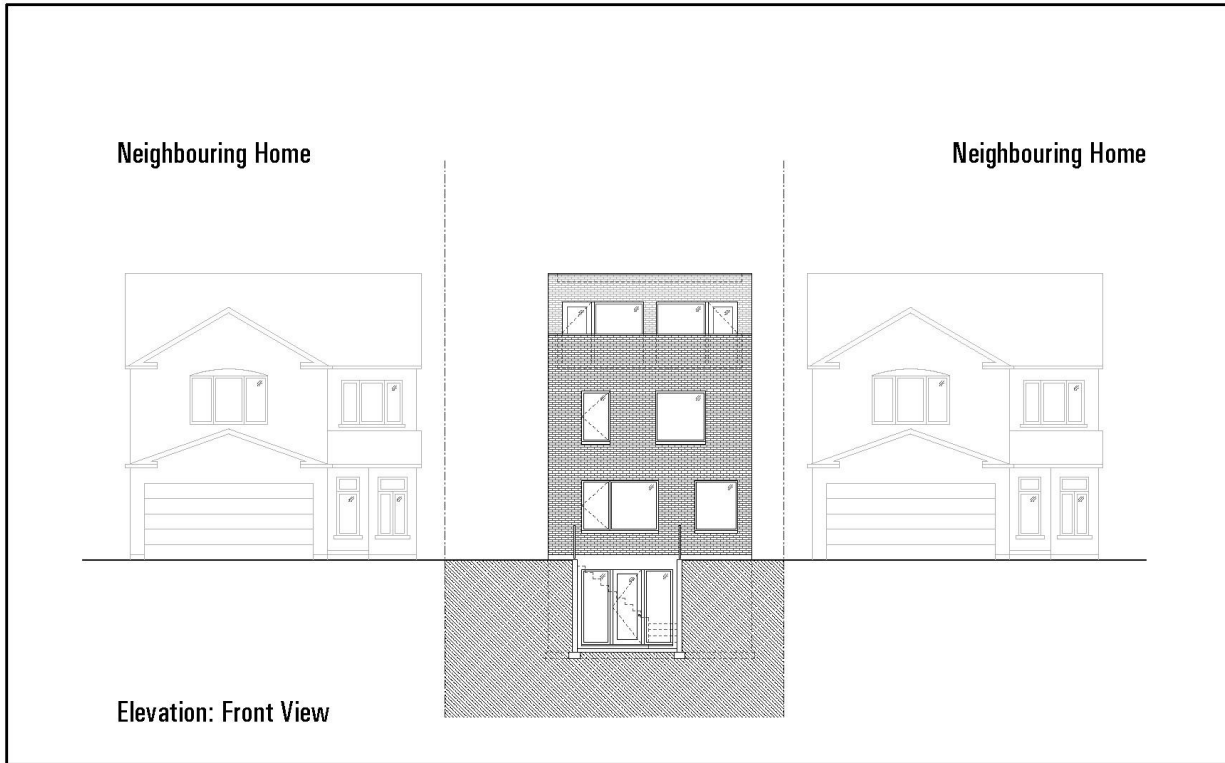
# Attachment 8a: Case Study Two: Site Plan



Attachment 8a

Ward 23 Multiplex Study  
Case Study Two: Site Plan

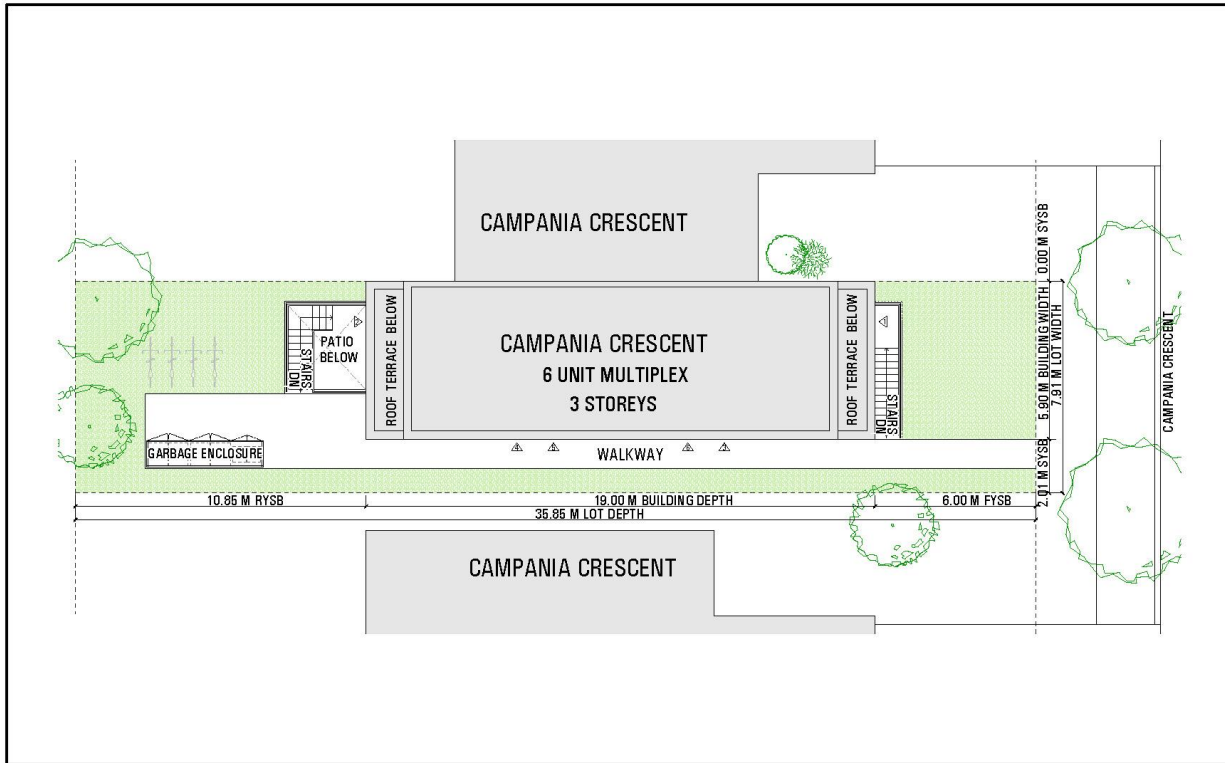
**Attachment 8b: Case Study Two: Elevation**



**Attachment 8b**

**Ward 23 Multiplex Study  
Case Study Two: Elevation**

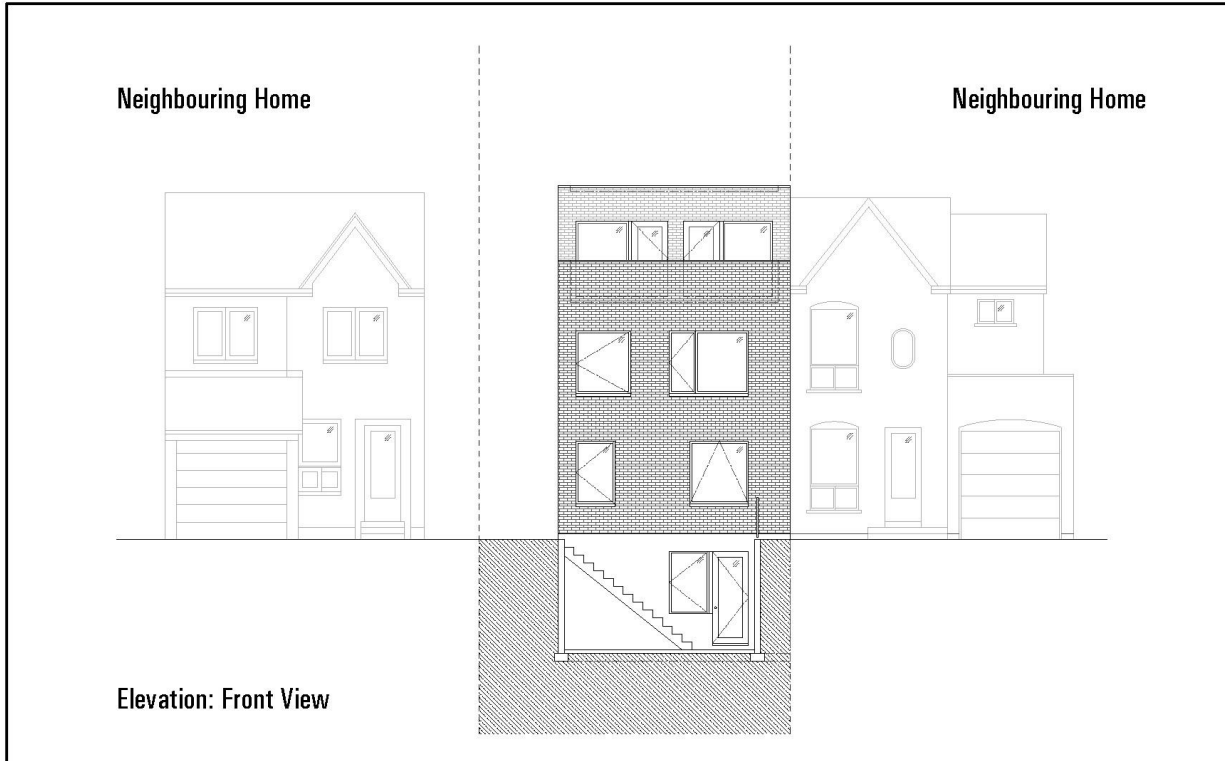
**Attachment 9a: Case Study Three: Site Plan**



**Attachment 9a**

**Ward 23 Multiplex Study  
Case Study Three: Site Plan**

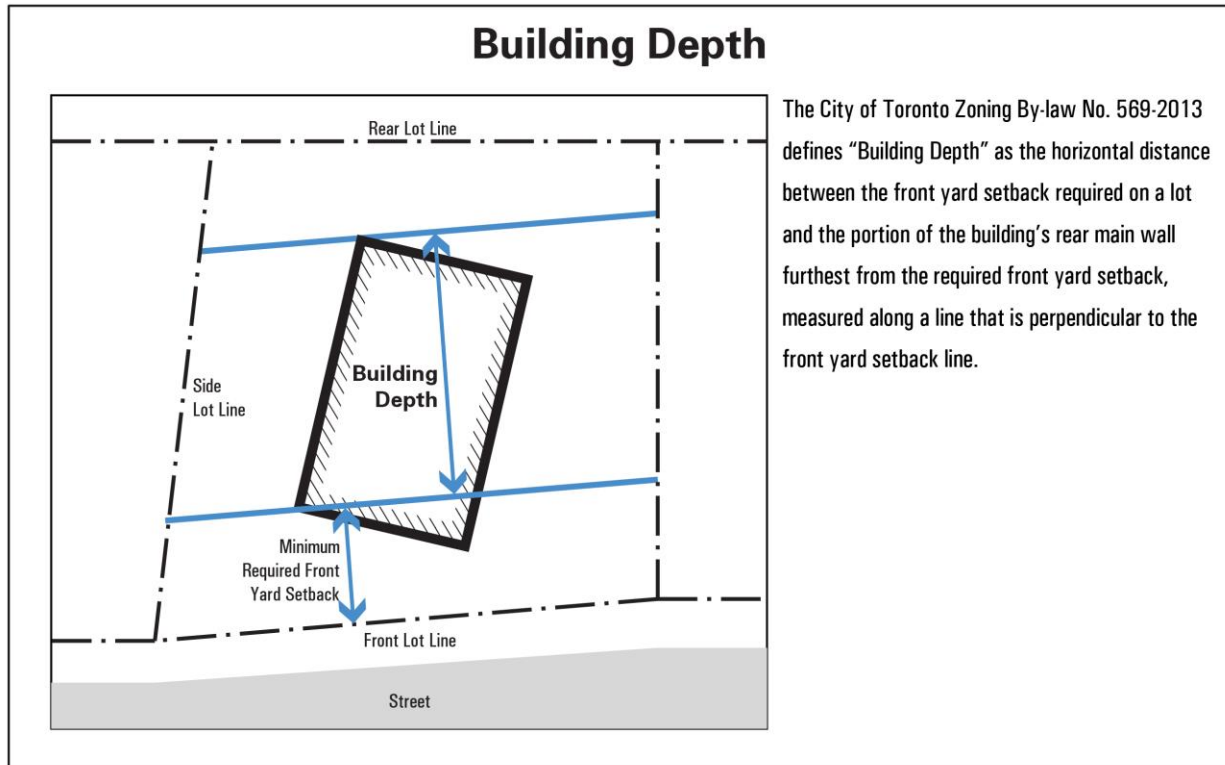
**Attachment 9b: Case Study Three: Elevation**



**Attachment 9b**

**Ward 23 Multiplex Study  
Case Study Three: Elevation**

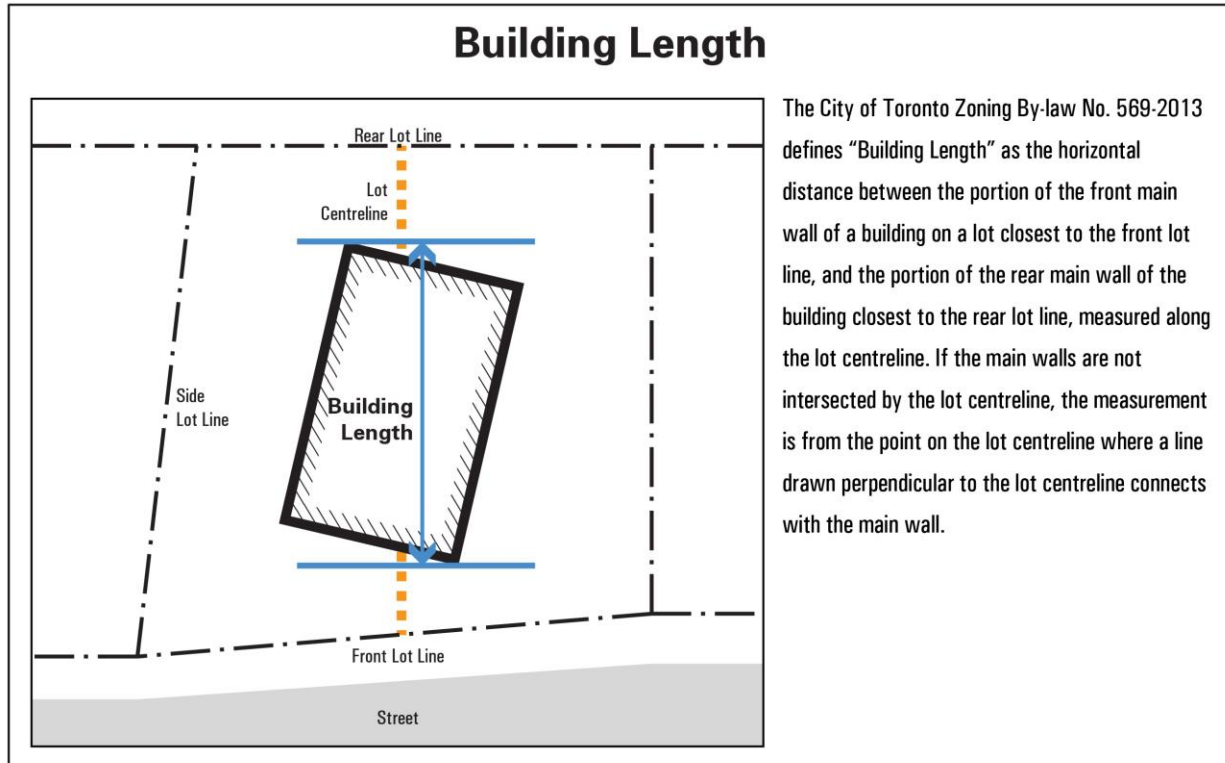
## Attachment 10: Building Depth



Attachment 10

Ward 23 Multiplex Study  
Building Depth

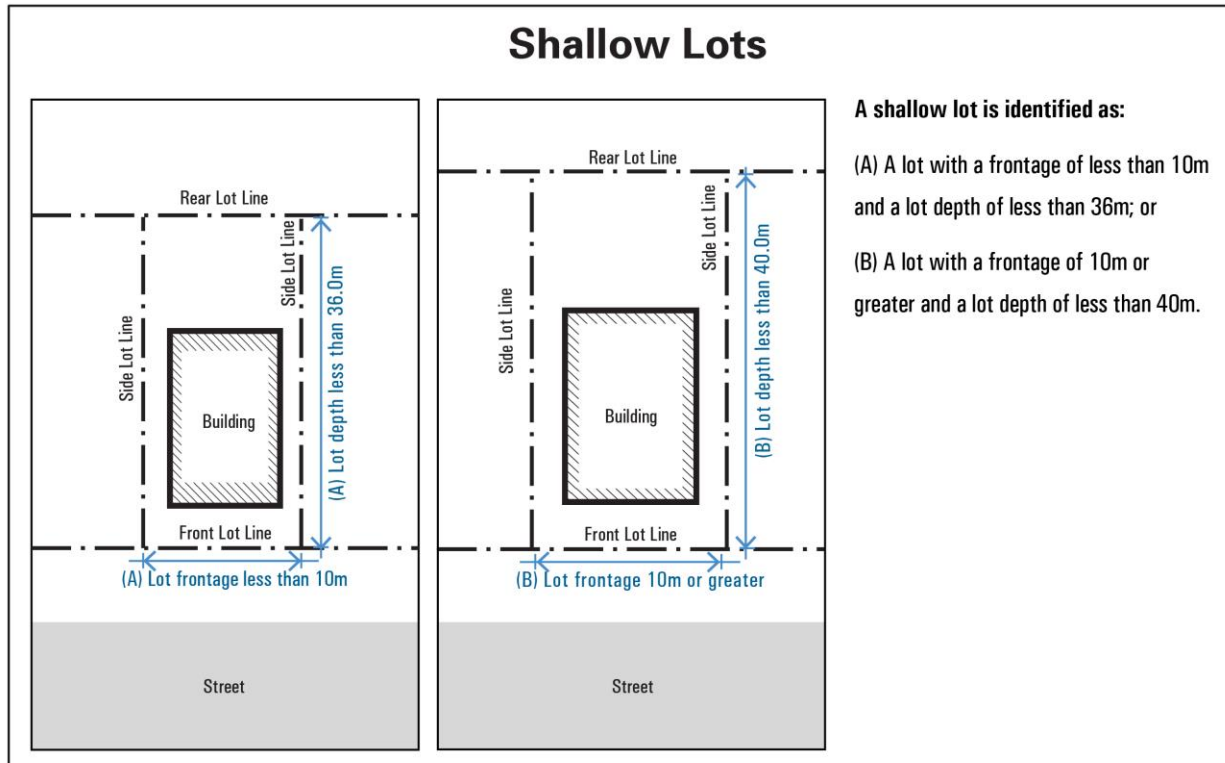
## Attachment 11: Building Length



Attachment 11

Ward 23 Multiplex Study  
Building Length

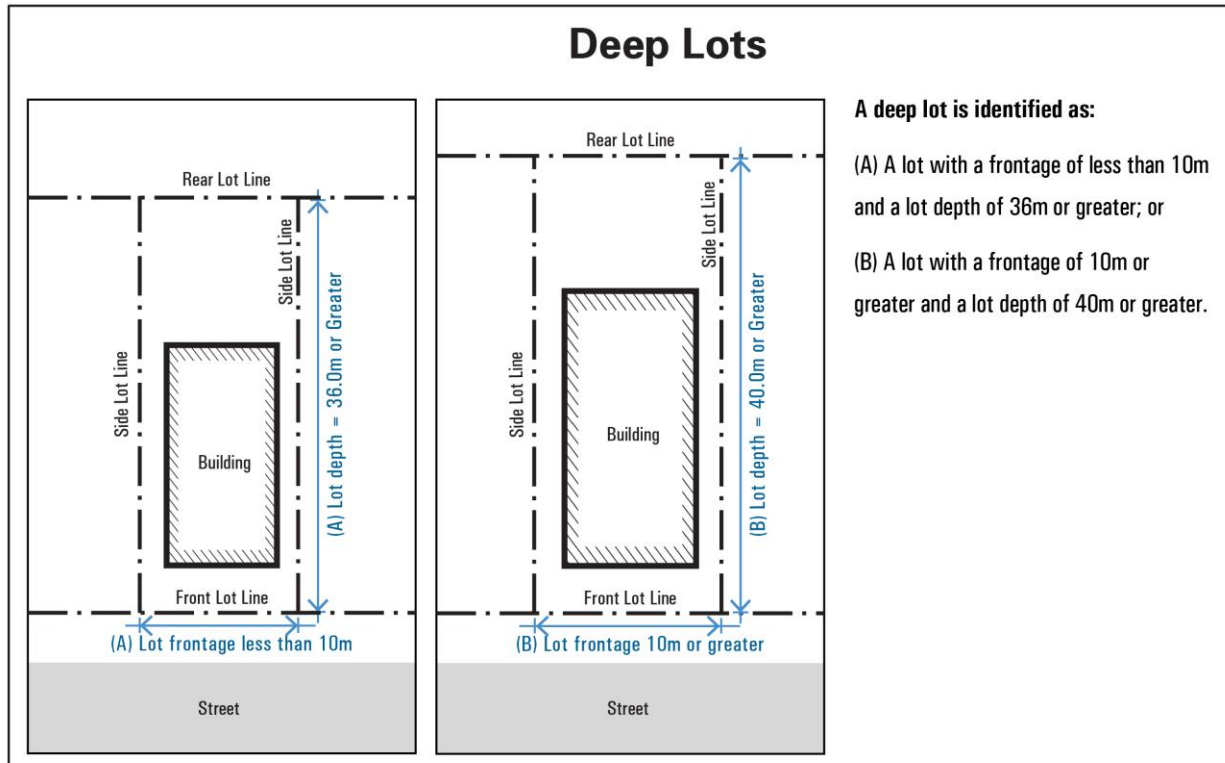
## Attachment 12: Shallow Lot



Attachment 12

Ward 23 Multiplex Study  
Shallow Lots

## Attachment 13: Deep Lot



Attachment 13

Ward 23 Multiplex Study  
Deep Lots