

Housing Action Plan: Avenues Policy Review – Decision Report

Date: January 2, 2025

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: All

SUMMARY

For over two decades, Toronto's *Avenues* have been part of the City's strategy to manage growth and accommodate intensification. Through the Housing Action Plan (HAP) 2022-2026, Council directed City Planning to review the Official Plan to ensure that it aligns with the need for more housing in areas that can accommodate more residential growth. As part of the [HAP Work Plan](#), the Avenues Policy Review examined opportunities to enable more housing by reframing the *Avenues* vision, policies, and mapping. This initiative represents one of 54 actions items in the HAP.

Avenues have attracted significant realized and potential growth. The City's Development Pipeline bulletin for 2023 (January 2019 - December 2023) reported that *Avenues* contained the most proposed projects of any of the Official Plan's growth management areas. In total, there are 640 development projects (271 under review, 227 active, and 142 built) that account for over 180,000 residential units and over 1 million square metres of non-residential gross floor area, representing 24% of the city's units and 8% of its non-residential gross floor area in the pipeline. While not all of these projects are approved, under construction, or built, this data demonstrates the importance of *Avenues* in supporting transit supportive growth.

This report recommends an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) to update the *Avenues* policies in Section 2.2.3. It also introduces mapping changes to Map 2 to expand the *Avenues* geography and other policy updates necessary to implement the new vision and policy framework. These updates leverage the *Avenues* as a growth management tool, identifying more opportunities for housing across the city and creating a more streamlined policy framework with clear direction on the type of growth to be directed to *Avenues*. The most significant changes include:

- 283 kilometres of **new Avenues**, representing an increase of approximately 165%.
- Removing requirements for Avenue Segment Reviews and new Avenue Studies.
- Introducing a new monitoring program to assess the *Avenues* implementation.
- Directing growth along *Avenues* to be up to the height and scale of mid-rise buildings.

- Directing more growth near subway, light rail transit, and GO transit stations, approximately 36% of new and existing Avenues.
- Providing uses that activate the ground floor in developments along *Avenues* in *Mixed Use Areas*.
- Directing applicants to consult with small businesses, community service providers, and the local community when proposing developments that would result in the displacement of existing small businesses and community service providers, and to assess the potential of their return.

To implement this new vision, policies, and mapping for *Avenues*, this report also recommends next steps for staff to redesignate and rezone lands along and nearby *Avenues*. The new policies do not result in a net new development application submission requirement in the new *Avenues* policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council adopt OPA 778 in accordance with Attachment 1.
2. City Council direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to commence the necessary work to bring forward an Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment upon Council's adoption of OPA 778 to implement the intent of the new *Avenues* vision and policies, including:
 - a. where appropriate, redesignate and rezone lands along *Avenues*;
 - b. where appropriate, redesignate *Neighbourhood* lands nearby *Mixed Use Areas* and *Apartment Neighbourhoods* along the *Avenues* to facilitate the planned built form of the *Avenues*; and
 - c. in the absence of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing issuing a decision on the Council adopted Official Plan delineations and policies for Protected Major Transit Station Areas and Major Transit Station Areas, make best efforts to provide additional height and density zoning permissions with appropriate performance standards for lands along *Avenues* in *Mixed Use Areas* within a 500 to 800-metre walking distance to existing and planned subway, light rail transit, and GO rail stations as shown on Official Plan Map 4.
3. City Council direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of OPA 778 and to report back as part of the statutory review of the Official Plan with any recommended amendments.
4. City Council direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to continue and conclude all *Avenue* studies that were commenced before December 31, 2024 and that these studies consider the new vision and policy recommendations in OPA 778.

5. City Council authorize the City Solicitor and appropriate City staff to take such necessary steps, as required, to implement City Council's decision.
6. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to make such stylistic and technical changes to the recommended OPA 778 as may be required.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Government of Canada's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) provides incentive funding to local governments aimed at increasing housing supply. It also supports the development of complete, low-carbon and climate-resilient communities that are affordable, inclusive, equitable and diverse. The recommendations in this report will help satisfy the conditions set out in the City's application under the HAF, as this initiative responds directly to the Federal request that municipalities consider increasing the minimum allowable density and minimum allowable height within walking distance to transit. This funding would assist a number of initiatives that support and expedite delivery of the HousingTO Plan and Housing Action Plan.

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 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 a cornerstone of inclusive neighbourhoods, supports the environment, and improves the socio-economic status of individuals, families, and communities.

This report helps to advance the City's Housing Action Plan which takes a multi-pronged approach to increasing housing supply, housing choice, and affordability for current and future residents.

Expanding housing options in existing communities by introducing new *Avenues* across the city is consistent with the new Chapter One of the Official Plan. A key priority of Chapter One is to address housing demand through delivering a broader range of housing options and distributing opportunities for new housing supply across all communities. This is an important step towards enabling both market, non-market, and mixed housing production to exceed the provincial housing target of 285,000 new homes by 2031. This initiative is intended to increase and accelerate 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.

The potential displacement of existing small businesses and community service providers that are affordable and provide culturally relevant goods and services to Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving populations is an ongoing challenge across Toronto, but is especially pronounced in areas experiencing significant change and growth. The new Chapter One of the Official Plan recognizes that as the city grows, it is necessary to take actions to address inequities that impact Toronto's most marginalized and vulnerable residents. This includes identifying and eliminating municipal practices that reflect and reinforce systemic exclusion, discrimination, and displacement of marginalized and racialized populations. As *Avenues* are areas intended for growth, it is important to identify and mitigate the hardships that comes with the displacement of existing small businesses and community service providers. The recommended policy framework for *Avenues* is intended to help mitigate the risk of displacement of existing small businesses and community service providers by ensuring that these establishments, as well as the local community, are meaningfully involved in the development review process.

CLIMATE IMPACT STATEMENT

On October 2, 2019, Council voted unanimously to declare a climate emergency and accelerate efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change by adopting a stronger emissions reduction target of net zero by 2050 or sooner. In December 2021, City Council adopted a new goal of net zero emissions by 2040. Climate and resilience considerations and recommendations were also included in the September 2020 report from the Toronto Office of Recovery & Rebuild.

Facilitating growth along new *Avenues* helps to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by:

- making efficient use of land and resources;
- reducing the potential for sprawl by accommodating more housing in existing built-up areas, which also reduces transportation GHG emissions regionally;
- facilitating the construction of more tall and mid-rise buildings which can more easily achieve lower operational emissions compared to low-rise buildings;
- increasing densities within existing built-up areas and supporting the creation of complete streets to enable low carbon transportation choices such as walking, cycling, and public transit; and
- maximizing the use of existing infrastructure, which avoids building new carbon-intensive infrastructure elsewhere.

DECISION HISTORY

On December 14, 2022, Council adopted Item CC2.1 - 2023 Housing Action Plan, which directed the City Manager to develop a Housing Action Plan for the 2022-2026 term of Council. The Housing Action Plan is to include targeted timelines for the approval and implementation of a range of policy, program, zoning and regulatory actions to increase the supply of affordable housing in support of complete communities. Specifically, direction was given to complete the review of the City's Official Plan to ensure that it aligns with the need for more housing in areas of the city identified for residential opportunities.

<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" which included direction to City Planning to explore opportunities to streamline study requirements for building new housing along *Avenues*, extend and potentially introduce new *Avenues*, update the vision and policy direction for how *Avenues* will develop, and consider opportunities to create areas of transition between *Avenues* and *Neighbourhoods* to enable more housing.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.EX3.1>

On February 28, 2024, Planning and Housing Committee adopted 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 and report back with recommended Official Plan Amendments in Q4 2024; to explore policy and mapping changes for certain City-owned sites with the potential to support the delivery of housing; and to consider redesignation of lands identified as areas of transition from *Neighbourhoods* to *Mixed Use Areas*.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH10.3>

On December 5, 2024, Planning and Housing Committee adopted PH17.14 - "Our Plan Toronto: Draft Delineations – Protected Major Transit Station Areas and Major Transit Station Areas (9 stations) – Proposals Report". This report recommended that staff use the draft delineation of 2 Protected Major Transit Station Areas and 7 Major Transit Station Areas as the basis of consultation to inform a final Official Plan Amendment. The report also considered the merits of the British Columbia approach of Transit Oriented Areas (TOAs) and concluded that the provincial Major Transit Station Area policy framework provides a more flexible approach to determining the appropriate density and scale of development while still achieving the same policy objectives of TOAs. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH17.14>

- As part of City's the Housing Accelerator Fund, at its meeting on December 13, 2023, Council directed staff to report to the Planning and Housing Committee on the British Columbia legislative approach on transit-oriented housing permissions (Bill 47) and its applicability to Toronto's Major Transit Station Areas. The above report demonstrates that the Ontario framework provides a more flexible approach to determine the appropriate density and scale of development that can be supported while still achieving the same policy objectives.

The Decision History for additional items that support the objective of enabling housing across Toronto's Major Streets and *Avenues* are found in Attachment 2.

BACKGROUND: PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Provincial Planning Statement (2024)

On October 20, 2024, the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS 2020) and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020 were merged into the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS 2024). All decisions of Council regarding planning matters must be consistent with the PPS 2024.

The PPS 2024 provides province-wide policy direction on land use planning and development to, among other matters, ensure the full range of housing need is met, promote a strong and competitive economy, optimize investments in infrastructure and public services facilities, create a sense of place, support the agricultural sector and sensitive areas, and mitigate risks to public health and safety. It includes policies on key issues, such as:

- the efficient management of land and infrastructure over the long term in order to minimize impacts on air, water, and other resources;
- building complete communities that improve social equity and overall quality of life for people of all ages, abilities and incomes;
- promoting communities with a mix of housing, recreational opportunities, and transportation choices, including active transportation and transit; and
- encouraging a sense of place in communities by promoting a well-designed built form.

The recommended amendments to the *Avenues* policy framework and the identification of new *Avenues* are consistent with the PPS 2024 and are supported by several policies, including policies that direct municipalities to:

- support the achievement of complete communities by accommodating an appropriate range and mix of lands uses, housing options, transportation options, and employment to meet long-term needs;
- encourage transit-supportive development and intensification in proximity to transit, including corridors and stations;
- support redevelopment of commercially-designated retail lands to support mixed-use residential;
- promote densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure, and public services facilities, and support the use of active transportation;
- identify and focus growth and development in strategic growth areas; and
- identify the appropriate type and scale of development in strategic growth areas.

Official Plan

A new Chapter One of the Official Plan came into effect on May 16, 2024, and sets out a vision that informs how the city will grow over the next 30 years. The priorities, vision, and principles reflect the shared values of Torontonians and are expressed in a way to guide development and are the foundation of the other chapters in the Plan. The new vision sets out four actionable goals to become:

- a city of complete communities with equitable access to services and amenities;
- a sustainable and climate resilient city;
- the most inclusive city in the world; and,
- a city that contributes to a just future for Indigenous Peoples.

Chapter Two of the Official Plan integrates transportation and land use policies to guide growth across the city. Its policies support this aim by:

- attracting more people and jobs to targeted growth areas in the city that are supported by good, affordable transit services and other infrastructure, and
- directing growth to the *Centres, Avenues, Employment Areas* and Downtown.

The current *Avenues* vision and policies are in Section 2.2.3 (*Avenues: Reurbanizing Arterial Corridors*) and the location of *Avenues* are identified on [Map 2](#). *Avenues* are described as areas that will "reurbanize" to create new housing and job opportunities, improve transit service, create more shopping opportunities, and gradually improve the public realm. The *Avenues* are generally intended to perform a "main street" role as a focal point for the local community with a vibrant public realm. The Official Plan acknowledges that not all *Avenues* will experience the same level of reurbanization, as each *Avenue* is unique.

Currently, the Official Plan requires *Avenues* studies to establish a framework for reurbanization and recognizes that some *Avenues* that already function well as "main streets" and have appropriate zoning may not need further study.

Implementation of the *Avenues* Framework

Since 2002, the implementation of the policies has been carried out through individual *Avenues* studies. To date, City Planning has completed over 30 *Avenue* studies across Toronto, covering over 45% of the 172 kilometres of current *Avenues*. In 2009, Council directed staff to develop an *Avenues* & Mid-Rise Buildings Action Plan to enable more housing and jobs close to existing transit and infrastructure.

Since the *Avenues* and Mid-Rise Buildings Study was adopted by Council in 2010, *Avenues* have become an increasingly important part of the urban structure of the city. For example, the [Development Pipeline bulletin for 2023](#) (January 2019 - December 2023) reports that *Avenues* contained the most development projects of any of the growth areas. In total, there are 640 development projects along the *Avenues*, which account for:

- 188,639 residential units, representing 24% of the city's units in the development pipeline.
 - Of the 188,639 residential units in the development pipeline, 22,607 have been built, 57,206 are either approved, have submitted a building permit application, or are under construction, and 108,826 are under review.
- Over 1 million square metres of non-residential gross floor area, representing 8% of the city's non-residential GFA in the development pipeline.

While *Avenues* contain the greatest number of development projects compared to the other growth areas, the projects are generally smaller in scale. This reflects both the implementation of the *Avenues* and Mid-Rise Buildings Study and general built form context. Many of the largest projects along *Avenues* are on Eglinton Avenue, partly as a response to the Eglinton Crosstown LRT. Other notable *Avenue* segments with several large development projects are Sheppard Avenue East and Yonge Street.

Housing Action Plan

The Housing Action Plan (HAP) priorities for the 2022-2026 term of Council include timelines for the approval and implementation of a wide range of actions and policies. They include programs to increase the supply of housing within complete, inclusive, and sustainable communities that have 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 housing sector (including non-profit and co-op housing providers) to modernize and grow their stock.

The *Avenues* Policy Review is one of 54 HAP actions and supports the City's goal of accelerating the supply of housing by examining and removing policy barriers to new housing. The new homes enabled by the HAP will contribute to the provincial housing target of 285,000 new homes in Toronto by 2031.

The HAP and associated work plan directed staff to explore opportunities to streamline study requirements for building new housing along *Avenues*, extend and potentially introduce new *Avenues*, update the vision and policy direction for how *Avenues* will develop, and consider opportunities to create areas of transition between *Avenues* and *Neighbourhoods* to enable more housing.

An Integrated Approach to Unlocking Toronto's *Avenues* and Major Streets

City Planning is taking a comprehensive and integrated approach to advancing related HAP action items, namely:

- The *Avenues* Policy Review;
- [The EHON Major Streets Study](#);
- [Updates to the Mid-rise Design Guidelines](#);
- [As-of-right Zoning for Mid-rise Buildings on *Avenues* without *Avenue* Studies](#);
- As-of-right Zoning for *Avenues* with completed *Avenue* Studies but without implementing zoning; and
- Redesignating and rezoning new *Avenues*.

Together these initiatives are a transformation of the planning framework for major streets and *Avenues* across the City. Each plays a role in providing more opportunities for housing, including:

- Official Plan policies and as-of-right zoning permissions for townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings in *Neighbourhoods* along major streets;
- implementing as-of-right zoning permissions for mid-rise buildings along *Avenues* that have in many instances remained largely unchanged since 2002;
- updating the Mid-rise design guidelines to apply lessons learnt over the last fourteen years; and
- updating Official Plan *Avenues* policies and mapping to refresh the City's growth management framework and identify new *Avenues*.

See Attachment 3 for more a detailed explanation of the related HAP work program items.

Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods: Major Streets Study

The [Major Streets Study](#) is part of the [Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods](#) (EHON) initiative, which examines opportunities to bring more housing to Toronto's low-rise neighbourhoods along the City's major streets that are on [Map 3](#) of the Official Plan.

The EHON Major Streets Study pre-dates the HAP, and like other EHON projects it was incorporated into the HAP when that plan's work program was introduced in 2023. The [final report](#) with Official Plan Amendments and Zoning By-Law Amendments was adopted by City Council in May 2024.

The EHON Major Streets Study looked at the lands that abut major streets that are designated *Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan. The study excluded lands that are subject to policies that direct intensification, such as MTSAs, secondary plans, and *Avenues*. The final recommendations of the EHON Major Streets study increased residential densities and height to permit townhouses and small-scale apartment buildings on these lands.

The *Avenues* are identified on [Map 2](#) of the Official Plan as areas where growth will be directed. Since the *Avenues* are also geographically related to major streets, areas that are recommended as new *Avenues* overlap with those areas identified as part of the EHON Major Streets Study. The Avenues Policy Review has identified some opportunities for greater intensification on major streets beyond what the EHON Major Street Study introduces.

Attachment 4 to this report identifies the new recommended *Avenues* and the areas where the EHON Major Streets zoning would apply. City Planning will continue to ensure that the emerging policies are complementary to one another, and that the areas where they apply do not conflict.

COMMENTS

Avenues are a key part of the urban structure of the city due to continued public transit investment. However, the geography and policy framework for *Avenues* have not substantially changed over the past 22 years. With evolving growth pressures, there is an opportunity to update the policy framework to align with the vision set out in Chapter One and address the housing challenges set out in the Housing Action Plan.

Consultation

The consultation program for the Avenues Policy Review occurred in two phases. The first phase was between June and September 2024, and the second phase occurred in November 2024.

The consultation program focused on sharing draft policy directions endorsed by the Planning and Housing Committee and the [draft map](#) of the recommended new *Avenues* (made public June 2024). This information was available for review and comment as part of staff presentations and online information on the [project webpage](#).

Members of the public were invited to provide feedback and submit their comments on the recommended policy directions and mapping changes in virtual public consultations, by way of email (HAP.Avenues@toronto.ca), or by completing an online survey. Advertising of the consultation opportunities occurred in social media posts, Councillor newsletters, information on the City Planning Consultations webpage, and email outreach using the Our Plan Toronto contact list.

In addition to consultation events, an online survey was available on the project webpage. The survey was open from June to July 2024 and received a total of 336 responses. A presentation was also delivered to the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee and the Toronto Seniors' Forum.

A total of 25 formal consultations events have provided opportunity for community and stakeholder input. These events included:

- 12 District-based virtual public consultations (3 in each Community Planning District)
- 3 City-wide virtual public consultations

- 3 virtual meetings with development and real estate industry representatives (BILD and TRREB)
- 2 virtual meetings with Residential Associations
- 2 virtual meetings with Business Improvement Areas
- 2 virtual meetings with Community Housing Providers
- 1 virtual meeting with Advocacy and Research Organizations

Comments on a wide range of subjects were shared along with feedback on the draft policy directions and mapping. The following is a summary of the feedback received, grouped thematically:

Built Form

- Mid-rise buildings next to low-rise areas could cause shadow and privacy impacts.
- Mid-rise buildings along *Avenues* can help support public transit and create more housing options in existing communities.
- Buildings taller than mid-rise near higher-order transit stations is supportable and aligns with provincial policies.
- Buildings need to be designed for accessibility and an aging population.
- There is uncertainty regarding how “areas of transition” would impact properties adjacent to *Avenues*.

Complete Communities

- Communities across the city need better access to retail and services.
- Development along *Avenues* should support creating space for new businesses and services, especially in areas where they are scarce.
- Existing businesses and services are being displaced by new developments and they need to be supported.
- Intensifying *Avenues* can help create more housing options for existing and new residents.

Infrastructure

- Development along *Avenues* may overburden existing hard and soft infrastructure.
- New infrastructure, including transit infrastructure, needs to be put in place before further growth is allowed.
- Development along *Avenues* may lead to even more traffic congestion.
- Allowing development to happen along the major streets that are well served by public transit can help reduce future impacts on traffic congestion and encourage more transit investment.

Environment

- Development on *Avenues* could lead to the loss of green space and biodiversity.
- Tree preservation is critical as trees play an important part in making the city beautiful and mitigating climate change.
- Development on *Avenues* could result in stormwater management problems.

- Development on *Avenues* could negatively impact surrounding environmentally sensitive areas.

Land Use Compatibility

- Identifying *Avenues* next to *Employment Areas* and Major Facilities could adversely affect the operations of existing businesses.

Toronto's Planning Framework

- There was confusion expressed regarding the interaction and overlap of *Avenues* with EHON Major Streets policies, Major Transit Station Area policies, and existing Secondary Plans.

Online Survey

The *Avenues* Policy Review online survey was launched on June 5 and was available until July 19, 2024. In total 336 responses were received. The survey asked for input on, among other matters, housing needs, what amenities are needed for daily living within walking or cycling distance, and opportunities for intensification. Key findings from the survey include:

- Nearly three-quarters of respondents felt that being within walking distance to businesses and services was important.
- Nearly half of respondents reported that their neighbourhood lacks housing options to meet their current or future housing needs.
- Most respondents identified being close to public transit and local businesses and services as a key factor for introducing new housing options.

Official Plan Amendment: Four Areas of Focus

This *Avenues* Policy Review focused on:

1. Updating the vision and policy direction;
2. Extending and introducing new *Avenues*;
3. Streamlining study requirements; and
4. Identifying nearby *Neighbourhoods* lands for redesignation to enable the planned built form of *Avenues*.

The following summarizes the recommendations for each area of focus and are the basis of the recommended Official Plan Amendment (Attachment 1).

1. Updating the Vision and Policy Direction

New explanatory text is recommended that sets out a new vision for the *Avenues* and precedes the recommended policies. This explanatory text includes both non-policy text and sidebars that describe the context and intent of the policies.

Updating the Vision

The current vision for *Avenues* is centered on supporting growth by enhancing housing and job opportunities, improving the public realm, expanding access to businesses and amenities, and strengthening transit services. This vision defines the primary function of *Avenues* as “main streets” with varied roles depending on their land use context.

The new vision and recommended policies broadly maintain the current vision for *Avenues* as places to grow, improve the public realm, create opportunities for retail close to home, and align growth with transit service. Updates have been made to align the vision for *Avenues* with the new Chapter One of the Official Plan and PPS 2024, by emphasizing that *Avenues* will help foster complete communities with access to:

- more housing options;
- transit; and
- businesses and amenities.

The new vision and recommended policies differentiate the role of *Avenues* based on land use context. *Avenues* in *Mixed Use Areas* will play a “main street” role by activating ground floors with commercial and institutional uses and enabling mid-rise developments. *Avenues* in *Apartment Neighbourhoods* will play a more “residential” role by encouraging small-scale commercial and institutional uses on the ground floor and enabling mid-rise residential development. *Avenues* near subway, LRT, and GO stations in *Mixed Use Areas* may support taller and denser development with a wide range of commercial uses and amenities.

To clarify the intent of the policies and the different roles of *Avenues*, the recommended Official Plan Amendment includes new explanatory sidebars. These sidebars will help explain the importance and goal of activating the ground floor of developments, how the displacement of existing businesses is addressed on *Avenues*, and outlines a monitoring program. The monitoring program will help inform and guide *Avenues* toward becoming complete communities.

Updating the Policy Direction

The recommended policy framework implements the new vision for *Avenues* with direction on where the *Avenues* policies apply, the planned built form of the *Avenues*, where “activating” uses are provided or are encouraged; and other required aspects needed to create sustainable and complete communities.

The recommended policies also remove two study requirements: *Avenues* Studies and *Avenues* Segment Reviews. The current *Avenues* policies rely on these studies to provide policy direction. *Avenues* Segment Reviews are an application requirement in Schedule 3 of the Official Plan. The recommended Official Plan Amendment would remove that requirement from Schedule 3.

These proposed changes respond to direction from the HAP to remove policy barriers to building housing to increase the supply of housing within complete communities.

Experience gained from completing over 30 Avenues studies, coupled with tools like the Mid-Rise Design Guidelines, and updated zoning to allow for mid-rise buildings, eliminates the need for additional studies to guide development on *Avenues*.

The proposed policies also address issues related to the displacement of existing small businesses and community service providers along *Avenues* and guide the implementation of as-of-right zoning for *Avenues*.

The recommended OPA deletes all policies under Section 2.2.3 and replace with a new policy framework for the *Avenues*:

- **Policy 1** provides high-level direction articulating why growth will be directed to *Avenues*. Specifically, these areas are well served by transit, can support the creation of complete communities, and can provide a full range of housing.
- **Policy 2** identifies where *Avenues* policies apply: lands or development sites with frontage on *Avenues* as shown on Map 2, and the right-of-way of *Avenues*, given the important role the public realm and transit plays in areas of growth.
- **Policy 3** allows development on *Avenues* to be up to the height and scale of a mid-rise building in lands designated *Mixed Use Areas* and *Apartment Neighbourhoods*. Where lands along *Avenues* are within a 500 – 800 metres walking distance of an existing or planned subway station, light rail transit station, or GO rail station and in *Mixed Use Areas*, development may go beyond mid-rise buildings in height and scale. These higher order transit stations are identified on Map 4 of the Official Plan. The 500 – 800 metre distance aligns with provincial major transit station areas policies to encourage transit supportive development. Development with the greatest height and scale should be located at the station.

As directed by City Council on March 20, 2024 ([2024.EX12.5](#)) City Planning, in consultation with other divisions, is undertaking a comprehensive review of [Map 4](#) of the Official Plan (Higher Order Transit Corridors). Staff are anticipating bringing forward a final report by the third quarter of 2025. This update to Map 4 will likely result in identifying additional higher order transit stations across the city where Policy 3 would apply, such the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, Finch West LRT, and Ontario Line.

- **Policy 4** provides direction on “activating” the ground floor of developments (i.e., commercial uses and institutional uses) and why activation along *Avenues* is important. It directs development along *Avenues* in *Mixed Use Areas* to provide uses that activate the ground floor and limit ground floor residential uses. Development along *Avenues* in *Apartment Neighbourhoods* is encouraged to do so. Direction is given to encourage a range of unit sizes on the ground floor in *Mixed Use Areas*. In *Apartment Neighbourhoods* direction is given for ground floor units to be designed for the potential conversion to activating uses.
- **Policy 5** ensures heritage conservation and the relevant policies are considered.
- **Policy 6** addresses development on *Avenues* that would result in the displacement of existing small businesses and community service providers. Applicants will be

required as part of a complete application to: (1) demonstrate how the local community will be consulted with to assess their need for retail and services uses, and how the existing small businesses and community service providers will be consulted to assess the potential for their return, and (2) provide a plan detailing how existing small businesses and community service providers will be notified of the development proposal. This information would be provided through an existing application requirement in Schedule 3, such as a planning rationale or a public consultation strategy report. At this time, applications for an Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment, or combined Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment would be required to satisfy this policy.

- **Policy 7** provides general direction on how *Avenues* will facilitate complete communities, including by enhancing the public realm, ensuring universally accessible spaces and buildings, improving transit quality, strengthening local retailing, and ensuring adequate hard and soft infrastructure.
- **Policy 8** provides clarity that Chapter 4 land use policies prevail on lands broadly identified as *Avenues*.

Additional Height Permissions on Avenues

The Avenues Policy Review considered how to align growth with transit on *Avenues*. The Official Plan identifies mid-rise buildings as transit supportive, and the recommended policies direct mid-rise buildings onto *Avenues*. The proposed policy framework responds to Council's direction ([2024.PH16.1](#)), "to make best efforts to identify additional opportunities to enable increased housing supply along existing and proposed *Avenues* that are served by frequent transit, including consideration of increasing height permissions to 12 storeys."

As part of the recommended policies, Policy 3 (b) allow development to potentially be larger than a mid-rise building in *Mixed Use Areas* within a 500 to 800-metre walking distance of subway, light rail transit, and GO rail station. This walking distance aligns with major transit station areas in the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) to focus growth near transit.

Approximately 36% of existing and proposed *Avenues* (not accounting for land use designation) are within a 500 to 800-metre walking distance of subway, light rail transit, and GO rail station. Examples of locations where the policy would apply includes portions of Bloor Street West, Warden Avenue, Eglinton Avenue East, Kingston Road, and Weston Road. This report recommends redesignating and rezoning lands along *Avenues* within these areas to enable additional height and density up to and beyond 12 storeys, where appropriate.

Policy 3 (a) allows development up to the height and scale of a mid-rise building along *Avenues* in *Mixed Used Areas* and *Apartment Neighbourhoods* when not within a 500 to 800-metre walking distance of a subway, light rail transit, and GO rail station. In the Official Plan, the height of a mid-rise building is generally no greater than the width of the street right-of-way (ROW). For example, this means that mid-rise buildings often

vary in height from 6 storeys (with a 20 metre ROW) to 11 storeys (with a 36 metre ROW).

As part of the recent update to the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines (2024.PH17.10), several performance standards were revised to facilitate mid-rise development across the city. Two updates were made to address the height of mid-rise buildings. The first update allows for mid-rise buildings to be up to 14 storeys when adjacent to streets with a 45-meter right-of-way (ROW). The second update recognizes that there may be certain site conditions where exceeding the height associated with the ROW are appropriate. Specifically, this would be on deep lots, provided that the development meets the objectives of the Official Plan and other guidelines.

2. Extend and Introduce New Avenues

The recommended Official Plan Amendment extends and introduces new *Avenues* on Map 2. The identification of these *Avenues* along major streets was informed by an analysis that considered:

- current and planned frequent and higher-order transit;
- proximity to Employment Areas;
- opportunities to connect existing *Avenues*; and
- proximity to major post-secondary institutions.

In total, this recommended Official Plan Amendment would add 283 kilometers of *Avenues* to Map 2, increasing the total to 455 kilometers of *Avenues* across the city (Attachment 5 and 6).

Current and Planned Frequent and Higher-Order Transit

A key principle of the Official Plan is to strategically align growth with transit to enable all residents to have convenient access to transit and capitalize on major infrastructure investments. Further, the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) requires municipalities to plan for intensification along frequent transit corridors and major transit station areas. The assessment is grounded in frequent and higher-order transit, Official Plan Map 4 (Higher Order Transit Corridors), Official Plan Map 5 (Surface Transit Priority Network), and the Council adopted major transit station area delineations. The vast majority of the recommended *Avenues* align with either the higher order transit corridors or transit priority segments.

Proximity to Employment Areas

The Official Plan sets out a policy framework that emphasizes protecting *Employment Areas* as places for economic growth that are separated from residential areas to support business activity. While *Avenues* do not overlap with *Employment Areas* on Map 2, identifying *Avenues* adjacent to *Employment Areas* has the potential to cause land use compatibility issues and adverse affects on both the businesses in *Employment Areas* and adjacent sensitive land uses (i.e. residential). The identification of *Avenues* adjacent to *Employment Areas* has been avoided, except in limited circumstances where there is existing or planned light rail transit or subway stations.

Opportunities to Connect Existing Avenues

In some cases, the existing *Avenues* on Map 2 are fragmented or isolated. Where the other components of the criteria did not result in connecting existing *Avenues* together, consideration was given to whether there is an opportunity to create logical connections between two existing *Avenues* or an *Avenue* and a *Centre*. For example, on Map 2 there is a fragmented *Avenue* segment along Dundas St. West between the Humber River and Royal York Road. Connecting this fragmented segment to the existing *Avenue* along Dundas Street West and Etobicoke Centre creates a continuous *Avenue* along Dundas Street West near transit.

Proximity to Major Post-Secondary Institutions

Major post-secondary institutions are some of the largest employers and trip generators in the city. These institutions also create substantial housing demand from both students and employees. Part of the identification of *Avenues* considered streets near major post-secondary institutions, including University of Toronto Scarborough Campus, York University Keele Campus, and George Brown College Casa Loma Campus.

3. Streamline Study Requirements

Avenue Studies have been the primary planning tool to implement existing *Avenues*. Where an Avenue Study has not been completed and an application is received to redevelop a site along an *Avenue*, the Official Plan currently requires that an applicant complete an Avenue Segment Review. These reviews include an assessment of the potential impacts of incremental development of the entire *Avenue* segment in a similar form, whether this scenario would adversely impact any *Neighbourhoods or Apartment Neighbourhoods*, and whether the development can be supported by available infrastructure.

Avenue Segment Reviews

The recommended OPA proposes to delete the requirement for *Avenue Segment Reviews* (Section 2.2.3, Policy 3 and 4). Deleting these policies will help streamline the review process for development along *Avenues*. Through consultation with Development Review staff, there was a near consensus that *Avenue Segment Reviews* (submitted as a complete application requirement) slow down the development review process. It was determined that much of this work duplicates a Block Context Plan that can form part of a complete application for development.

Avenue Studies

The recommended OPA proposes to delete the requirements for city-initiated Avenue Studies and replace them within a monitoring program. This would help streamline the policy framework for development along *Avenues* by applying a more consistent and predictable development framework based on existing best practices.

The framework for Avenue Studies was established when the first post-amalgamation Official Plan was adopted in 2002. Since then, the City has studied approximately 45%

of the existing *Avenues*, adopted new built form policies in the Official Plan, and implemented comprehensive design guidelines.

A monitoring program will be used to evaluate the *Avenues* policy framework and proactively monitor the development pipeline along *Avenues*. The monitoring program would seek to understand the extent to which:

- housing supply is increasing along *Avenues*;
- development along the *Avenues* is aligned with the planned built form;
- development along *Avenues* has increased housing options in local communities;
- development along *Avenues* has provided a net gain in non-residential space;
- development along *Avenues* has resulted in a greater diversity and number of businesses and services that serve local residents;
- development along *Avenues* has resulted in the permanent displacement of existing businesses and services;
- the mode share of people living along and adjacent to *Avenues* has changed; and
- transit ridership has increased along the *Avenues*.

This recommended Official Plan Amendment would not result in any net new complete application submission requirements. With the removal of Avenue Segment Reviews from the *Avenues* policy framework, an amendment to Schedule 3 of the Official Plan is recommended to remove this as part of a complete application requirement.

4. Identifying *Neighbourhoods* lands for redesignation to enable the planned built form of *Avenues*

The HAP directed the *Avenues* Policy Review to consider opportunities to create “areas of transition” between *Avenues* and *Neighbourhoods* to enable more housing. These areas are intended to facilitate the planned built form of *Avenues* by addressing scenarios where lots along *Avenues* are too shallow to accommodate development that meets the planned built form, such as mid-rise buildings (see Policy 3). Table 1 of the updated mid-rise design guidelines provides some direction regarding the ideal lot depth based on the height of the mid-rise building to achieve an upper storey depth of 18 metres for a standard double-loaded corridor bar-building oriented parallel to the street. Lots that are below the ideal depth are considered shallow.

This report recommends (recommendation 2 b) that staff, as part of a second phase of work, identify lands to be redesignated as either *Mixed Use Areas* or *Apartment Neighbourhoods* where the lands along the *Avenues* designated *Mixed Use Areas* or *Apartment Neighbourhoods* are too shallow meet the planned built form.

The criteria to be applied for this second phase of work are proposed to include appropriately identifying these scenarios through detailed geographic analysis. Other criteria for this work will include those established above, including proximity to *Employment Areas*, the *Green Space System*, and will be further refined following the adoption of the recommendations in this report.

Next Steps

Following Council's consideration of Official Plan Amendment 778, staff will:

- make best efforts to bring forward an Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment to redesignate and rezone lands along *Avenues* where appropriate. This includes redesignating lands nearby *Avenues* to facilitate their planned built form, and enabling additional height and density with appropriate performance standards for lands along *Avenues* in *Mixed Use Areas* within a 500 to 800-metre walking distance to existing and planned subway station, light rail transit station, and GO rail stations on Official Plan Map 4;
- monitor the implementation and effectiveness of Official Plan Amendment 778 and report back as part of the statutory review of the Official Plan with any recommended amendments; and
- continue and conclude all *Avenue* studies that were commenced before December 31, 2024 and that these studies consider the updated vision and policy recommendations in OPA 778. Examples of current *Avenues* studies include the [Bloor West Village Avenue Study](#) and the [Lake Shore Boulevard West Avenue Study](#).

CONCLUSION

This report draws on twenty years of experience applying the *Avenues* policies and lessons learned from studying approximately 80 kilometres of areas that fall under the *Avenues* policies to advance the HAP objectives and several important city-building goals, including:

- increasing housing supply;
- enabling more housing options in existing communities;
- making better use of existing hard infrastructure;
- supporting and enhancing transit in existing communities;
- creating more inclusive and complete communities by supporting opportunities for new community services and facilities (i.e., libraries, schools, childcare centres, etc.) and local retail and service uses varying in type and scale;
- enhancing the public realm by creating an attractive, safe, and comfortable pedestrian environment; and
- facilitating the development of complete streets that supports walking, cycling, and transit use.

Expanding permissions for housing along the *Avenues* will address Official Plan objectives in Chapter One to distribute opportunities for new housing supply across the city. The success of all *Avenues* will depend on the ability of the City to deliver investments and improvement to the quality and reliability of transit, enhancing the public realm, and delivering critical soft and hard infrastructure. Together, these ingredients will help contribute to sustainable, and complete communities along *Avenues*.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Recommended Official Plan Amendment 778

Attachment 2: Additional Decision History

Attachment 3: Housing Action Plan: Further Information on Avenues Related Initiatives

Attachment 4: Map - Proposed New *Avenues* and EHON Major Streets

Attachment 5: Map - Urban Structure with Proposed New *Avenues*

Attachment 6: Ward Maps - Urban Structure with Proposed New Avenues

Attachment 1: Recommended Official Plan Amendment 778

AMENDMENT 778 TO THE OFFICIAL PLAN OF THE CITY OF TORONTO

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

1. Chapter 2, SHAPING THE CITY, 2.2.3 AVENUES: REURBANIZING ARTERIAL CORRIDORS is deleted in its entirety and replaced with:

2.2.3 Avenues: Creating Complete Communities Along Strategic Transit Corridors

The *Avenues* on Map 2 play a key role in Toronto's growth. As major streets that are well served by public transit, *Avenues* will change and grow to provide a full range of housing options and contribute to Toronto's fabric of complete communities.

High quality, reliable public transit service is essential to the success of the *Avenues*. The growth and redevelopment of the *Avenues* should be supported by high quality and reliable transit services, including priority measures for buses and streetcars, and urban design and traffic engineering practices that creates safe, comfortable and attractive *Avenues* for all users—transit riders, pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.

As *Avenues* change and grow, new housing options will help ensure that households of all sizes and life stages have more options in every community. Improvements to the public realm, combined with more spaces for local jobs, shops and services along the *Avenues* will help create sustainable, complete communities that are vibrant, walkable, and transit-oriented, where the daily needs of all people can be met. As *Avenues* grow it will also be essential to address the loss of affordable rental housing, as well as the displacement of small businesses and community service providers.

Avenues will serve different roles. Some *Avenues* act as 'main streets' while other *Avenues* will be primarily 'residential'. Lands that are designated *Mixed Use Areas* along *Avenues* will play a 'main street' role, with uses that activate the ground floor like shops and services that residents can conveniently access to meet their daily needs. These 'main street' *Avenues* are neighbourhood focal points, with attractive and busy sidewalks, meeting places for residents, and a broad range of housing options.

While some *Avenues* already fulfill this role, others are still developing their potential. For those already functioning as 'main streets,' redevelopment must preserve or enhance this role. Special efforts are also needed to ensure that the displacement of existing small businesses and community service providers is addressed. New development should maintain, if not improve, the ability of these *Avenues* to meet residents' daily needs by providing space for activating uses on the ground floor and, where possible, a variety of unit space sizes to encourage a range of uses.

On *Avenues* designated as *Apartment Neighbourhoods*, the primary role will be residential, but uses that activate the ground floor are encouraged. Where residential uses are initially provided on the ground floor, these spaces should be designed so that the ground floor can later transition to activating uses. These spaces can evolve over time to support the daily needs of residents and foster complete communities.

While the function of *Avenues* varies, the planned built form of *Avenues* is mid-rise, except where existing and planned subway, light rail transit, and GO rail stations can potentially support greater intensification along *Avenues*. Mid-rise buildings are a transit-supportive form of development between low-rise and tall building forms. They provide good transition and predictable impacts on nearby low-scale areas while supporting growth.

Mixed Use Areas along *Avenues* with existing or planned higher order transit stations offer unique opportunities where redevelopment at a greater scale may be appropriate. These areas can support more housing supply and a diverse mix of uses that activate the street and offer the potential for larger format commercial and institutional uses such as grocery stores, recreational facilities, and schools. These areas are not all the same and it is important that development in these areas be contextually appropriate and meet the intent of the built form policies of this Plan. Generally, development with the greatest height and scale should be located at the higher order transit stations and transition down in height and scale further from the stations.

Sidebar: Activating the Ground Floor on Avenues

Activating the ground floor of developments with commercial and institutional uses, such as small-scale retail, services, and schools, will help enable equitable, convenient access to the amenities that serve the daily needs of all residents. To help provide opportunities for small businesses, including those that serve or are operated by racialized and marginalized communities, opportunities for commercial community land trusts and cooperative models to secure new commercial space are encouraged.

Sidebar: Addressing Displacement along Avenues

Many *Avenues* are home to small businesses and community service providers that are affordable and provide culturally relevant uses for Indigenous, Black, and other equity-deserving Torontonians. Growth along the *Avenues* has the potential to displace these small businesses and community service providers and the vital role they play to their community. It is important to address the impacts on these establishments that serve diverse communities through a variety of policies, programs, and through engagement that is part of the application process.

Sidebar: Monitoring the Avenues

The City will monitor all *Avenues* to help guide their growth toward becoming complete communities with a full range of housing. This will include monitoring the pace and intensity of growth, the change in housing stock, the amount of space for businesses and services, the displacement of small businesses and community service providers, transportation mode share, and transit ridership.

Policies

1. Growth and intensification will be directed to *Avenues* as shown on Map 2 to:
 - a. concentrate jobs and housing in areas well served by public transit;
 - b. accommodate and contribute to complete communities that meet the daily needs of all people; and,

- c. provide a full range of housing, including affordable housing.
2. *Avenues* policies apply to lands or development with frontage on *Avenues* as shown on Map 2 and the right-of-way of *Avenues*.
 3. To achieve growth and intensification on *Avenues*, development along *Avenues*:
 - a. will be up to the height and scale of a mid-rise building in *Mixed Use Areas* and *Apartment Neighbourhoods*; and,
 - b. may go beyond the height and scale of a mid-rise building in *Mixed Use Areas* when located within a 500 to 800-metre walking distance of an existing or planned subway station, light rail transit station, or GO rail station as shown on Map 4. The greatest height and scale should be focused at the station.
 4. Activating the ground floor of buildings along *Avenues* is important to enable equitable, convenient access to the amenities that serve the daily needs of all residents. To achieve this objective, development along *Avenues* will:
 - a. provide appropriate uses that activate the ground floor and minimize ground floor residential uses in *Mixed Use Areas*;
 - b. be encouraged to provide appropriate uses that activate the ground floor in *Apartment Neighbourhoods*;
 - c. be encouraged to include a variety of unit space sizes that activate the ground floor in *Mixed Use Areas*; and,
 - d. be designed to protect for future uses that can activate the ground floor in *Apartment Neighbourhoods*, where appropriate.
 5. Development along *Avenues* will contribute to placemaking and the city's cultural heritage by conserving heritage properties.
 6. Where a development proposal along an *Avenue* would result in the displacement of existing small businesses and community service providers, including those operated by and/or serving racialized and marginalized populations, the applicant, as part of a complete application requirement in Schedule 3, will demonstrate the following:
 - a. How the local community will be consulted to assess the range of local community needs for retail and services uses, and how the existing small businesses and community service providers will be consulted to assess the potential for their return in the development.
 - b. A plan to provide notice of the proposal to the existing small businesses and community service providers located on the applicant's property.

7. To facilitate sustainable, complete communities that are attractive to residents and businesses, *Avenues* will:
 - a. include public realm and streetscape improvements, including green infrastructure;
 - b. have publicly accessible spaces and buildings that are universally accessible to all;
 - c. include transportation improvements such as transit priority measures, improved connections to higher-order transit stations, new or improved laneways and shared off-street parking facilities, cycling improvements, and new walkways;
 - d. contribute to an attractive, safe and comfortable pedestrian environment that encourages walking and strengthens local retailing; and,
 - e. be served by adequate parks, community services and facilities, and water and sewer infrastructure.
 8. The land use designation policies in Chapter Four of this Plan apply to and prevail on lands broadly shown on Map 2 as *Avenues*.
2. Chapter 2, SHAPING THE CITY, 2.3.1 HEALTHY NEIGHBOURHOODS, Policy 4 is amended by deleting the words “*Avenue* Study, or” after the words “following an”.

Such that Policy 4 reads as follows:

4. Intensification of land adjacent to neighbourhoods will be carefully controlled so that neighbourhoods are protected from negative impact. Where significant intensification of land adjacent to a *Neighbourhood* or *Apartment Neighbourhood* is proposed, Council will determine, at the earliest point in the process, whether or not a Secondary Plan, area specific zoning by-law or area specific policy will be created in consultation with the local community following an area based study.
3. Chapter 5, IMPLEMENTATION: MAKING THINGS HAPPEN, 5.3.3 STRATEGIC REINVESTMENT, unshaded introductory text, paragraph 1, is amended by deleting the words “, the *Avenue* Studies,” after the words “Secondary Plans”.

Such that paragraph 1 reads as follows:

As Toronto grows and evolves over the life of this Plan, there will be a constant need for investment in infrastructure and services to maintain and improve our quality of life. The demands for investment are great and choosing priorities will always be a challenge. The Plan can help guide these difficult decisions, but it cannot predict from year to year what the best investment will be. Some priorities will emerge from the implementation plans and strategies discussed above, as well as specific area studies such as Secondary Plans and Community Improvement Plans.

4. Chapter 5, IMPLEMENTATION: MAKING THINGS HAPPEN, 5.3.3 STRATEGIC REINVESTMENT, Policy 2 is amended by deleting the words “and *Avenue Studies*” after the words “Secondary Plans”.

Such that Policy 2 reads as follows:

2. The need for new municipal investment to replace, enhance or build new infrastructure to implement this Plan will be identified through a variety of implementation plans and strategies. These include Secondary Plans, community service and facility strategies, Community Improvement Plans and other similar city-building initiatives, based on population and employment growth and existing unmet needs. The identified infrastructure improvements will be provided in a timely manner to service population and employment growth and existing unmet needs. New development will continue to be reviewed to ensure the adequacy of social and physical infrastructure. Where appropriate, staging or phasing of new development will be provided for where infrastructure improvements are required to service anticipated growth.
5. Schedule 3, Application Requirements, is amended by deleting the “Avenue Segment Review” requirement in its entirety.
6. Map 2, Urban Structure, is amended by adding the *Avenues* overlay to streets, as shown on the attached Appendix 1.

Appendix 1 to Official Plan Amendment 778

