TORONTO

REPORT FOR ACTION

Housing Action Plan: Avenues Policy Review - Phase Two Work Plan

Date: May 28, 2025

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Avenues have become significant areas of growth since the Official Plan was first adopted by Council in 2002. As part of the Housing Action Plan (HAP) 2022-2026, Council directed City Planning to bring forward policy updates and as-of-right zoning in support of more housing across Toronto. The Avenues Policy Review supports this goal by leveraging Avenues as a growth area to expand opportunities for more housing across the city by facilitating mid-rise buildings along Avenues.

The Avenues Policy Review is divided into two phases of work. The first phase updated the Official Plan's vision and policies for *Avenues*, extended and introduced new *Avenues*, and streamlined study requirements by removing the requirement for Avenue Segment Reviews and Avenue Studies. This first phase was completed in February 2025 with Council's adoption of Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 778.

This report marks the beginning of the second phase of work by proposing a strategy, work plan and consultation framework to implement the Avenues vision and policies introduced through OPA 778, with the goal of expanding as-of-right zoning for mid-rise buildings on Avenues. This work will occur over several stages to ensure that sufficient time and resources are available to complete a comprehensive review and community consultation process across Toronto.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council adopt the proposed Phase Two Work Plan and Stakeholder and Public Consultation Framework for Phase Two of the Avenues Policy Review.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

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

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

The Avenues Policy Review Phase Two is intended to expand housing options by delivering policy updates and as-of-right zoning in support of more market, non-market, and mixed housing across Toronto. This initiative aims to accelerate the creation of a diverse range of housing options to accommodate people at all stages of life, meet the needs of all household sizes and incomes, and lead to more equitable and inclusive communities.

The Phase Two strategy, work plan and consultation framework aim to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to shape their city. Chapter One of the Official Plan recognizes that as Toronto grows, inequities that impact marginalized and vulnerable residents must be addressed. This includes identifying and eliminating barriers to participation for Black, Indigenous and equity-deserving communities. Chapter One builds upon the initiatives and partnerships being undertaken by the City that address the needs of equity-deserving communities while recognizing their contributions and legacies. Such undertakings work to ensure equity-deserving communities retain the ability to remain in their neighbourhoods as the city grows. These initiatives include, but are not limited to, the Confronting Anti-Black Racism (CABR) Action Plan, the Growing in Place initiative, and the Toronto Seniors Strategy.

CLIMATE IMPACT STATEMENT

On October 2, 2019, City 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 2024, 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 form the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild.

Facilitating growth along *Avenues* helps to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by efficiently using land and resources, reducing sprawl and transportation-driven emissions, allowing for mid-rise buildings with lower operational emissions, increasing density to support low carbon transportation choices, and maximizing use of existing infrastructure to avoid new carbon-intensive infrastructure elsewhere.

DECISION HISTORY

On February 5, 2025, Council adopted Item PH18.5 – "Housing Action Plan: Avenues Policy Review – Decision Report", removing the requirement for Avenue Segment Reviews and City-initiated Avenue Studies and adopting Official Plan Amendment No. 778. Council also directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to undertake a comprehensive review and consultation process for newly identified and not previously studied *Avenues* prior to bringing forward potential amendments to land use designations and zoning, prioritizing lands identified within Major Transit Station Areas.

https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.PH18.5

BACKGROUND: PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

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

The PPS 2024 provides a range of policy directions that, among other matters: a) ensure that the full range of housing needs are met while prioritizing a mix of housing; b) promote a competitive economy that efficiently uses land and infrastructure to minimize impacts on natural resources; and c) encourage a sense of place in the pursuit of complete communities that ensure equitable access to transportation, recreational opportunities, and public service facilities.

The amendments to the *Avenues* policy framework approved by Council are consistent with the PPS 2024 and are supported by several PPS 2024 policies that direct municipalities to:

- support the achievement of complete communities by accommodating an appropriate range and mix of land uses, housing options, transportation options, and employment to meet long-term needs;
- encourage transit-supportive development and residential intensification in proximity to transit, including corridors and stations;
- support redevelopment of commercially-designated retail lands to support mixed-use residential development;

- promote densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure, and public service facilities while supporting 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

On May 16, 2024, Chapter One of the Official Plan came into effect, establishing a vision for how Toronto 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, serving as the foundation for updating other chapters of the Official Plan. The new vision sets out for 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 land use and transportation policies to guide growth across the city. Chapter Two supports this aim with policies to attract people and jobs to targeted growth areas with good transit services and other infrastructure, namely the *Centres*, *Avenues*, *Employment Areas* and Downtown.

The *Avenues* policies are part of Chapter Two, in Section 2.2.3 and the location of *Avenues* are identified on Map 2 – Urban Structure.

Housing Action Plan (HAP) 2022-2026

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 delivering policy updates and as-of-right zoning in support of building housing, preserving and expanding the supply of rental homes, and supporting the community housing sector.

The Avenues Policy Review is one of 54 HAP actions that together aim to contribute to the provincial housing target of 285,000 new homes by 2031. The HAP directed City Planning staff to explore opportunities to streamline study requirements for building new mid-rise housing along *Avenues*, extend and 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.

Other related HAP action items include: the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) Major Streets Study, Updates to the Mid-rise Rear Transition Performance Standards and Urban Design Guidelines, and As-of-Right Zoning for Midrise Buildings on Avenues. City Planning is actively working to advance these items in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

Avenues Policy Review: Phase One - Official Plan Amendment No. 778

On February 5, 2025, Phase One of the Avenues Policy Review culminated with Council adopting OPA 778, which comprehensively updated the vision, policy and geography of *Avenues* in the Official Plan.

OPA 778 introduced 283 kilometres of new *Avenues* (see Attachment 1)—which represents a 165% increase—and removed the need for Avenues Studies and Avenue Segment Reviews. Since 2002, City Planning has completed over 30 Avenues Studies across Toronto, covering 45% of the original 172 kilometres of Avenues. Experience gained from these studies, coupled with tools like the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines contributed to the policies in OPA 778 adopted by Council.

The updated vision maintains *Avenues* as strategic growth areas, continues to align growth with transit, creates opportunities for more complete communities, and brings commercial and institutional uses closer to where people live. The vision articulates the different roles that Avenues play based on their underlying land use designation. *Mixed Use Areas* on *Avenues* help play a "main street" role with active ground floor commercial and institutional uses. *Apartment Neighbourhoods* on *Avenues* play a more "residential" role, while encouraging small-scale commercial and institutional uses on the ground floor.

The updated policies establish a mid-rise built form for development along most *Avenues*. The Official Plan generally says that mid-rise buildings should be no taller than the width of the street they face. The recently updated Mid-rise Building Design Guidelines provide direction regarding how the built form policy objectives of the Official Plan can be addressed. Greater height and scale along *Avenues* may be considered in *Mixed Use Areas* located within a 500 to 800-metre walking distance from an existing or planned subway, light rail transit, or GO rail station. The *Avenues* policies also direct that developments in *Mixed Use Areas* are to provide active ground floor uses, while developments in *Apartment Neighbourhoods* are encouraged to provide active ground floor uses. To address the potential for displacement of small businesses and community service providers, applicants must consult with residents to assess retail and service needs, consult existing businesses and service providers about the feasibility of their return, and provide a notification plan for any development proposal.

OPA 778 has been appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (Case Number: OLT-25-000221). As a result, the OPA is not yet in-effect. An initial Case Management Conference has been scheduled for June 9, 2025.

COMMENTS

Phase Two Work Plan

On February 5, 2025, Council directed staff to undertake a second phase of the Avenues Policy Review with a comprehensive review and community consultation process prior to bringing forward any Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments. Phase Two's scope is to implement the new vision and policies for *Avenues* by

redesignating and rezoning lands along new *Avenues* and *Avenues* that have not been previously studied for mid-rise buildings using standardized criteria that consider local conditions. Further, the rezoning of lands along 'Main Street' Avenues will include requirements for a minimum amount of space on the ground to be dedicated to commercial or institutional uses.

On February 5, 2025, Council directed staff to prioritize Phase Two work along Avenues located within MTSAs served by subway and light rail transit. Consistent with that direction, Phase Two will begin in Toronto and East York (TEY). Toronto and East York (TEY) has the highest concentration of MTSAs in the city. This area encompasses the downtown core and several major transit corridors, including the Bloor-Danforth subway line and the Ontario Line, which contribute to its dense network of transit stations.

This report recommends a strategy, work plan and consultation framework to undertake this work and is in keeping with Council's direction for a comprehensive review and community consultation process.

Phase Two consists of three stages, each approximately nine months in length.

- Stage One consists of two studies for Toronto and East York (TEY): an initial study in Ward 9 (Davenport) and Ward 11 (University-Rosedale) (target completion Q4 2025), followed by a separate study for all remaining TEY wards with Avenues.
- Stage Two will examine wards with significant Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs), prioritizing subway and LRT stations.
- Stage Three will examine remaining wards with fewer MTSAs.

In every stage, wards will be grouped together that share logical planning boundaries and transit lines to allow for a holistic study process to determine the appropriate redesignation and rezoning (see Attachment 3).

To support and help inform the community consultation process, City Planning has retained a consultant for the first stage of the work program, which is described further below.

Stage One: Initial Study, Toronto and East York (Wards 9 and 11)

Stage One will begin with an initial study of Ward 9 (Davenport) and Ward 11 (University-Rosedale). These neighbouring wards share continuous stretches of *Avenues* such as Ossington Avenue and College Street, enabling a holistic examination of approximately 2,500 candidate parcels within the two wards. Attachment 5 shows the Council-adopted Avenues for both wards. Additionally, both wards contain a high degree of Council-adopted MTSAs, consistent with Council's directive to prioritize *Avenues* within a 500 to 800-metre walking distance of an MTSA.

The first round of consultations for the initial study will analyze the local context and apply the selection criteria (see table 1 below). Options for potential redesignation and rezoning of *Avenues* will be presented to the public and key stakeholders for consultation in June - July 2025. Staff anticipate reporting to the Planning and Housing

Committee and City Council in Q4 2025 with recommended Official Plan Amendments and Zoning By-law Amendments.

The initial study will allow for the refinement of the work plan, selection criteria, and consultation strategy, where lessons learned from this phase can be applied to the remaining TEY wards (Wards 4, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 19).

Stage Two: Major Transit Station Areas

Stage Two will launch in 2026. Wards with a high degree of MTSAs that are not subject to an existing or planned planning framework (e.g., Secondary Plans and Avenue studies) will be examined, focusing on existing and planned subway and light rail transit stations. Wards with continuous stretches of *Avenues* and MTSAs that share the same transit line will be grouped to facilitate comprehensive studies. This will aid in a consistent approach across geographies.

On a preliminary basis, staff are recommending the following wards for Stage Two: Wards 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 15, 16, 20 and 21.

Stage Three: Remaining Wards

Stage Three will examine remaining wards that have fewer MTSAs, GO rail stations, and other limiting factors, such as existing or planned planning frameworks (e.g., Secondary Plans and Avenue studies). This phase is targeted to begin in 2027.

On a preliminary basis, staff are recommending the following wards for Stage Three: Wards 6, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24 and 25.

Existing Avenue Studies and Permissions

On November 14, 2024, Council directed staff to re-examine older avenues studies and consider opportunities to align their height, density and built form permissions with the recommended new as-of-right zoning for midrise permissions, and to investigate enabling greater residential densities on properties with limited or no residential permissions (2024.PH16.1).

Avenue Studies have been completed or are in-progress for over 80 kilometres of the city's existing Avenues. Each study involved extensive consultation and holistic review of an area's character, context, and infrastructure needs, focusing on the key elements for reurbanization of the corridor. The recommendations resulting from these studies are implemented through a combination of Secondary Plans/Area Specific Policies, Urban Design Guidelines, and Zoning By-law Exceptions. A list of the completed and ongoing Avenue Studies forms Attachment 2 to this Report and identifies how each policy framework generally aligns with the new as-of-right mid-rise zoning permissions. Information about relevant existing Avenue Studies will form part of the materials presented to the public and key stakeholders during the Stage 1, 2 and 3 consultations. The Phase Two scoping criteria set out in Table 1 of this Report include various land use compatibility criteria, which will help identify areas in which it would be inappropriate to introduce new avenue policies and implementing zoning permissions.

The focus and prioritization of Phase Two is on implementing the updated Avenues vision in relation to the 283 kilometres of new Avenues and the unstudied segments of existing Avenues appropriate for redesignation. To complete Phase Two in a timely manner and maximize the amount of new housing enabled, staff are focussing resources on community consultation and review to bring forward recommended amendments for the Phase Two areas and pausing work on the comprehensive review and update of existing Avenue Studies and analysis of residential permissions outside the Phase Two area.

Stakeholder and Public Consultation Framework

Comprehensive consultation is prioritized for all stages of Phase Two. Throughout the spring, staff have been meeting with interested Residents Associations to inform them about the planned scope of the study and identify key considerations for consultation.

The proposed stakeholder and public consultation strategy is aligned with City Council Decision 2 for PH18.5 (Avenue Policy Review – Decision Report), which directs staff to undertake comprehensive community consultation prior to bringing forward recommended amendments. In keeping with City Council Decision 2.b, staff will consult with local Councillors to identify key stakeholders and share community consultation materials to support Councillor communications to residents.

Each Stage will include two rounds of public and stakeholder consultation per study area. The first round will focus on refreshing the public and stakeholders on the aims of the Avenues Policy Review and solicit feedback on the application of the criteria for site selection and redesignation. The feedback received from the first round will inform the identification of lands suitable for as-of-right zoning permissions for mid-rise buildings along *Avenues*. Staff will use the feedback received to inform recommended Official Plan Amendments and Zoning By-law Amendments to be brought to the Planning and Housing Committee and Council.

To support this work, the City has retained a consultant to develop communication materials, ensure a comprehensive consultation strategy, and a final engagement summary for each report. The advice of the consultant may impact the approach to the consultation strategy outlined above. Any changes will be reported on as part of the reporting process outlined in this report.

How Lands will be Studied: Scoping Criteria and Guide

Each stage will apply two sets of criteria: first, scoping criteria will be applied to determine whether lands are suitable for further study and examination. Second, a guide will aid in determining the appropriate redesignation and rezoning.

Scoping Criteria

The proposed scoping criteria is shown in Table 1. The criteria are intended to guide the analysis to determine what lands are both in and out of scope for consideration for redesignation and rezoning. The following criteria is not exhaustive and may change

based on the initial stage, feedback from the public and stakeholders, and may differ based on the context of the area being studied.

Table 1: Scoping Criteria to Determine which Lands will be Examined Further

Include for Further Analysis

Lands designated *Neighbourhoods*, *Apartment Neighbourhoods*, and *Mixed Use Areas* with frontage onto an Avenue.

Neighbourhoods, Apartment Neighbourhoods, and Mixed Use Areas parcels adjacent to lands fronting onto an Avenue that may be needed to facilitate the construction of a mid-rise building on the Avenue.

Exclude from Further Analysis

Lands designated *Institutional Areas*, *Regeneration Areas*, *Employment Areas*, *Utility Corridors*, and *Parks and Open Space Areas*.

Lands covered by either in-effect or Council approved but not in-effect Secondary Plans.

Lands subject to ongoing Secondary Plan studies.

Lands covered by either in-effect or Council approved but not in-effect Avenue Studies or Local Area Studies. (A list and map of in-effect Avenue Studies is included in Attachment 2)

Lands subject to ongoing Avenue Studies or Local Area Studies. (A list and map of ongoing Avenue Studies is included in Attachment 2)

Lands covered by in-effect SASPs that conflict with the new *Avenues* policies (i.e., SASPs that include built form policies restricting height or density or land use conflicts).

Mixed Use Areas that already have as-of-right mid-rise or greater zoning permissions.

Mixed Use Areas that do not have residential zoning permissions and are within 30 metres of the property line of a rail facility.

Lands designated *Apartment Neighbourhoods* that have existing apartment buildings 5 storeys or greater in height.

Lands that are within an airport operating area or flight path for helicopters and where a mid-rise built form would cause a potential aviation safety hazard.

Lands that are generally within 300 metres of *General Employment Areas*, *Core Employment Areas*, or Major Facilities.

Lands that overlap with TRCA regulation limit.

Guide for Redesignation and Rezoning

Once lands have been scoped for further study, a guide will help determine what land use designation and zoning standards should be applied. Based on preliminary work completed for the initial study of Wards 9 and 11, staff have developed a draft guide below for redesignation and rezoning.

The following guide is not exhaustive and may change based on lessons learned in the initial study, feedback from the public and stakeholders, and may differ based on the context of the area being studied:

Guide: Existing Neighbourhoods

Consideration will be given to retaining lands as *Neighbourhoods* if there is no possibility of a mid-rise building to be constructed based on parcel dimensions, parcel fabric of the block, fixed physical features (such as roads and public laneways), and performance standards for mid-rise buildings.

Consideration will be given to redesignating lands to *Apartment Neighbourhoods* with the appropriate zoning category if all of the following apply:

- There is a possibility for a mid-rise building to be constructed based on parcel dimensions, parcel fabric of the block, fixed physical features (such as roads and public laneways), and performance standards for mid-rise buildings;
- There is no existing commercial establishment(s); and
- The block is not part of an existing commercial strip (e.g., main street).

Consideration will be given to redesignating lands to *Mixed Use Areas* with the appropriate zoning category if all of the following apply:

- There is a possibility for a mid-rise building to be constructed based on parcel dimensions, parcel fabric of the block, fixed physical features (such as roads and public laneways), and performance standards for mid-rise buildings; and
- There is an existing commercial establishment(s), or the block is part of an existing commercial strip (e.g., main street).

Guide: Existing Apartment Neighbourhoods

Consideration will be given to retaining lands as *Apartment Neighbourhoods* with existing zoning if there is no possibility of a mid-rise building to be constructed based on parcel dimensions, parcel fabric of the block, fixed physical features (such as roads and public laneways), and the performance standards for mid-rise buildings.

Consideration will be given to rezoning *Apartment Neighbourhoods* parcels with no redesignation if all of the following apply:

 There is a possibility for a mid-rise building to be constructed based on parcel dimensions, parcel fabric of the block, fixed physical features (such as roads and public laneways), and performance standards for mid-rise buildings;

- There is no existing commercial establishment(s); and
- The block is not part of an existing commercial strip (e.g., main street).

Consideration will be given to redesignating parcels to *Mixed Use Areas* with the appropriate zoning if all of the following apply:

- There is a possibility for a mid-rise building to be constructed based on parcel dimensions, parcel fabric of the block, fixed physical features (such as roads and public laneways), and performance standards for mid-rise buildings; and
- There is an existing commercial establishment(s), or the block is part of an existing commercial strip (e.g., main street).

Guide: Existing Mixed Use Areas

Consideration will be given to rezoning *Mixed Use Areas* parcels if there is a possibility for a mid-rise building to be constructed based on parcel dimensions, parcel fabric of the block, fixed physical features (such as roads and public laneways), and current performance standards for mid-rise buildings.

Guide: Shallow Lots with Frontage onto Avenues

Some parcels with frontage onto an *Avenue* may be too shallow to accommodate a midrise building based on the performance standards in the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines. These parcels are considered to be "shallow" and not have an "ideal lot depth". Ideal lot depth is defined in Table 1 of the Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines as shown in Attachment 4 and corresponds to the adjacent right-of-way width which informs the height of a mid-rise building.

In such cases, staff will assess whether "shallow" parcels with frontage onto an *Avenue* could be feasibly assembled with rear neighbouring lots currently designated as *Neighbourhoods, Apartment Neighbourhoods*, or *Mixed Use Areas*. The number of parcels to be considered for redesignation and/or rezoning will be informed by the number of parcels that would allow the ideal lot depth to be achieved based on Table 1 of the Mid-Rise Design Guidelines (see Attachment 4).

Next Steps

Consultation for Phase Two of the Avenues Policy Review is already underway. Staff are undertaking public and stakeholder engagement in Ward 9 – Davenport and Ward 11 – University Rosedale, working with local Councillors and residents to prepare draft Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments. Following consultation, staff will report to Planning and Housing Committee in the fourth quarter of 2025 with recommended amendments to allow as-of-right permissions for mid-rise buildings along Avenues in those wards. Staff will begin consultation in the remaining Toronto and East York wards in Q3 2025.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: City-Wide Map – Official Plan Map 2 Urban Structure with Council-adopted Avenues

Attachment 2: List and Map of In-effect and Ongoing Avenue Studies

Attachment 3: City-Wide Map – Recommended Staging of Wards

Attachment 4: Ideal Lot Depth in relation to the adjacent Right-of-Way Width and Building Height

Attachment 5: Ward Maps – Official Plan Map 2 Urban Structure with Council-adopted Avenues