



**MORE NEIGHBOURS
TORONTO**

Dear Members of the Planning and Housing Committee,

RE: PH18.5 - Housing Action Plan: Avenues Policy Review - Decision Report

About More Neighbours Toronto

[More Neighbours Toronto](#) is a volunteer-only organization of housing advocates that believe in building more multi-family homes of all kinds for those who dream of building their lives in Toronto. We advocate for reforms to increase our city's ability to build more homes in every neighbourhood. We are a big-tent organization with members across the political spectrum who are committed to counterbalancing the anti-housing agenda that has dominated Toronto's politics, created an affordability crisis, and cost burdened a new generation of aspiring residents. We are firmly committed to the principle that housing is a human right and believe Toronto should be inclusive and welcoming to all.

Position

More Neighbours Toronto welcomes the proposed changes to the Avenues Policies in the Official Plan. The existing Avenues Policies are a significant barrier to new housing. The draft Official Plan Amendments to simplify those policies and extend the Avenues to new streets are a major improvement that will help unlock stalled development on Avenues. They are significantly more aligned with the values expressed in Chapter 1 of the Official Plan. **We urge the Planning and Housing Committee and City Council to approve this item.**

The current requirement for Avenue Studies and Avenue Segment Reviews before development can proceed is a slow, unnecessarily cumbersome process that uses up too much time and effort from City Planning staff and developers. Individual Avenue Studies often take years to perform. In the more than two decades during which the current Avenue Policies have been in place, only 45% of the length of Avenues were studied. The proposed removal of the requirement for Avenue Studies and Avenues Segment Reviews is a necessary and welcome change.

The new policy to allow development up to the height and scale of a midrise building along Avenues is also an improvement. This replaces unnecessary complexity with a clear, simple rule.

With no sign of approval of Major Transit Station Areas by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the proposed increased density along Avenues near transit stations is a creative way to achieve a similar goal. Including this type of transit oriented development as part of the proposed Avenue Policy 3 also removes the necessity for the typologies included in the Avenues Policy Review Proposals Report. We applaud staff for this change from the Proposals Report.

We are happy to see the inclusion of new Avenues proposed as part of this Official Plan Amendment. This represents the first major addition to growth areas outlined in Chapter 2 of

the Official Plan in decades. We urge the Planning and Housing Committee and City Council not to approve any amendments which would reduce or remove new Avenues. We hope that this represents the first step towards proactive planning for future growth instead of reactive responses to development applications.

This item is one of several ongoing studies around Avenues. We hope that staff will be able to complete their study of expanding Mixed Use Areas, as well as As-of-Right Zoning for Avenues quickly so that these new Avenues policies can have their full effect as soon as possible.

While these new Avenues Policies are a significant improvement, especially to the newly identified Avenues, they will still be limited by the previously completed Avenue Studies. Many of these Avenue Studies have significant restrictions which will not allow development up to the level in the new proposed Avenues Policies. This may lead to the unintended consequence of new Avenues seeing significantly more development than existing Avenues. We recommend that staff establish a process to consolidate and review Avenue studies to ensure that they incorporate, and are consistent with, revisions to the Official Plan.

We thank staff for their work on this project. It has been a long study period with many consultations to organize and run.

Regards,
Damien Moule,
More Neighbours Toronto