

From: [Tristan Ridley](#)
To: [Planning and Housing](#)
Subject: [External Sender] Regarding the Avenues Policy Review and Mid-Rises
Date: December 2, 2025 7:06:44 PM

To Toronto City Council and Staff,

We write to you as residents of Toronto and on behalf of Strong Towns Toronto, a local chapter of the [Strong Towns](#) movement. The housing crisis is one of the biggest issues our group was founded to address, and lowering the barrier to adding homes along Toronto's many avenues can be a big step toward solving it.

Strong Towns Toronto overall endorses the Mid-Rise Manual from Environmental Defence. Much of what we would like to share has been presented there, and with more evidence and argument than we could fit in a letter.

We applaud Council and staff for the decision to legalise 6 story buildings as-of-right on some major streets, and urge council to extend this permission to *all* major streets. These are major streets, precisely the correct location for greater density and where more residents will have the best impact on the local environment. These are also the places where transit can take on the majority of the trips, improving congestion for everyone.

Homes having a connection to the street is a major part of building strong neighbourhoods, with real character and a thriving culture. We've seen across the world and in Canada that buildings of 3 to 6 stories do that better than any other, especially when they're *not* designed like short high-rises. These maximize the potential quality of life for new and existing residents alike. At the same time, buildings of 5 to 11 stories are the ideal balance of density to minimise impact and cost while addressing our housing crisis. We should be doing everything we can to encourage more, not putting barriers.

Toronto must review and remove inappropriate restrictions on these mid-rise buildings, rather than treating them like short high-rises. A building with potentially only 6 homes doesn't need the same utility, waste, and other facilities as a building with hundreds of residents. In general, restrictions to development should be making life for residents and neighbours better, not *preventing* changes that would benefit everyone. For example, step-back restrictions, and other limitations that make new homes smaller while eliciting identical negative feedback from the same neighbours.

We urge the city to create an expedited, prescriptive process for medium density buildings. Update by-right standards, making it clear to the builders what we want them to build, and make the process fast and simple when they follow them. Delays add a lot of cost to new housing, costs which residents end up paying. We believe a better balance can be struck with faster approvals with fewer deviations from improved by-right standards, providing

greater certainty and speed which benefits all parties.

Strong Towns Toronto believes that minimum parking requirements must be abolished, completely. Hundreds of properties that would otherwise be great potential sites for a 6 to 12 apartment walkup become completely unfeasible with the addition of even one mandatory parking space, especially since that takes up the valuable ground-level space that is inherently accessible. New housing without parking (where alternative transportation options exist) is an invitation for people to move here without a car. New housing with parking is an invitation to another car on our roads. We trust our neighbours to include a reasonable amount of parking for the local context.

A core tenet of Strong Towns is that “nowhere should face catastrophic change, nowhere should be immune from change.” There are large areas, notably Rosedale, that have been entirely excluded from change by this study. Every neighbourhood has ‘low hanging fruit’, places where more residents and taller structures would enhance the character and of the neighbourhood. Rosedale is no exception, with many lots within comfortable walking distance of existing subways.

Changes of this nature don’t need to be universal across the city. They need to be an improvement across the city. We would suggest that for later phases of this project, rather than focus on two wards with similar profiles at the same time, more could be learned by studying one inner ward, and one suburban ward in parallel.

We applaud staff for their work so far, and hope you take our suggestions and encouragement to heart. The housing crisis is an immediate, urgent problem, and your work enabling more mid-rises to be built faster and better will only benefit our communities. Please read the Environmental Defense Mid-Rise Manual, and ensure Toronto’s government is working to make our lives in the city better. We look forward to the inclusion of more mid-rise homes throughout the city, helping to build stronger neighbourhoods.

Sincerely,
Tristan Ridley,
Kyle Laskowski,
Rose Kudlac

On behalf of Strong Towns Toronto