



Welcome

Official Plan Review: Public Realm & Built Form Policy

Official Plan Context

What is an Official Plan (OP)?

- Policy document that provides guidance on how land in a municipality should be used.
- Prepared with input from the community.
- Guides planning and development to meet the needs of the community.

What is an Official Plan Review?

- The Province of Ontario, through Section 26 of the Planning Act, requires municipalities to revise their Official Plan every five years to ensure it is current and consistent with provincial interests and policy.

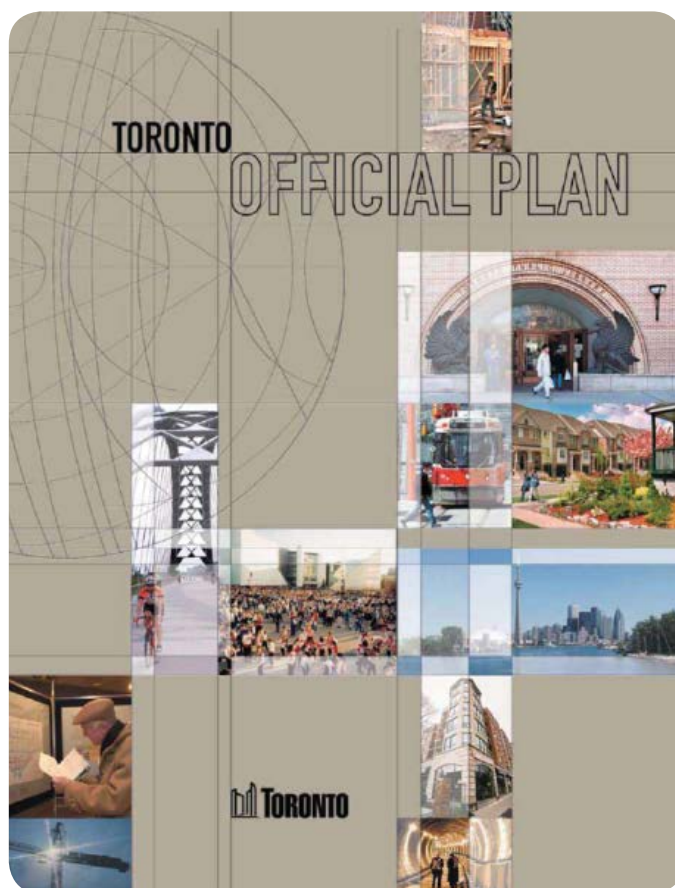
What has been done so far?

- The current Official Plan was approved in 2006, and the statutory Five Year Review subsequently began in 2011.
- Review is being done in stages by theme (e.g. Heritage, Urban Design) due to the size and complexity of policy matters. The stages help us focus more clearly on proposed changes.
- The review for some thematic policy areas of the Official Plan is complete, and is well under way for others.
- The City has adopted policy amendments for Heritage, Housing, Economic Health and Employment Lands, Environment, Neighbourhoods, Apartment Neighbourhoods and Transportation.

Where are we now?

- We are refining Public Realm and Built Form policies of the Official Plan as part of the broader Urban Design thematic review, which began in 2014.

The City of Toronto Official Plan is intended to ensure that the City evolves, improves and realises its full potential in areas such as transit, land use development, and the environment.



What is to come?

- Policies pertaining to transit, cycling and automated vehicles, as well as transit and street-related maps. Public consultation is anticipated in early 2019. For more information, contact Michael Hain, Senior Planner, Transportation, at Michael.Hain@toronto.ca.
- The next phase of Urban Design policy review will explore sun, wind, and pedestrian comfort. For more information, contact Itai Peleg, Planner, Urban Design, at Itai.Peleg@toronto.ca.

Why are we here?

In 2014, the City began an urban design consultation process that sought to engage the public and interested stakeholders in a broad discussion on Official Plan policies and urban design concepts.

After extensive research, round table discussions with city builders and urban design leaders, and city-wide public engagement over the course of two years, policy directions were approved by the Planning and Growth Management Committee (PGMC) to inform policy updates.

In January and June 2018, PGMC endorsed draft policy revisions for the Public Realm and Built Form sections of the Official Plan to implement the policy directions. The City is now asking the public to share comments and feedback on the resulting policy updates.

This is why you are here today!



“Urban Design enriches our daily lives as we walk the streets under a canopy of trees, enjoy nature in the heart of the City in a beautifully designed park or sit in an outdoor café framed by buildings that are attractive, active, and interesting.”

– Emilia Floro, Program Manager, Urban Design, Etobicoke

“In the last decade alone, we’ve added over a million square feet of publicly accessible space in the downtown through our POPS initiative. Recognizing and establishing criteria for these spaces through policy is important to ensure they contribute to our quality of life through creative place-making.”

– James Parakh, Program Manager, Urban Design, Toronto & East York

“The Block Context Plan will help us ensure that new developments fit well into their surrounding contexts. The Soil Volume Plan will promote healthy and large-growing trees along our streets and within development sites. Together with the new policies, these implementation tools will help us make Toronto an even better place to live, work, and play.”

– Xue Pei, Program Manager, Urban Design, Scarborough

“Heritage buildings and places give us a unique sense of place and a connection to our past. In a rapidly changing city, they stand out as some of the most beautiful parts and give us a sense of security, resilience and permanence.”

– Anne Fisher, Program Manager, Heritage Preservation Services

How did we get here?

**AUGUST
2014**

Planning and Growth Management Committee (PGMC) directs a review of the urban design policies, based on 11 policy directions, as part of the statutory 5-year review of the Official Plan

**OCT - DEC
2014**

Launch of Urban Design Matters: A city-wide campaign including public and stakeholder consultations to raise knowledge and understanding about urban design, confirm the policy directions and inform policy updates



**MAY
2015**

A summary of the Urban Design Matters consultations and the key work needed to review and update the urban design policies is presented to PGMC

We are here!

**NOV - DEC
2018**

City engages with public and stakeholders to obtain feedback on the public realm & built form draft policies

2019

City Planning to refine policies and report back to PGMC and Council

2016 - 2017

With the help of a consultant team, the City conducts further background research and consultations to inform policy updates

**JUNE
2018**

PGMC endorses the draft built form policy updates

PGMC endorses the draft public realm policy updates **JANUARY**

- Phase 1: Urban Design Matters Consultations
- Phase 2: Background Research and Policy Development
- Phase 3: Public Realm and Built Form OP Policy Consultations

How did we get here?

ENGAGEMENT AT A GLANCE

PHASE 1: URBAN DESIGN MATTERS CONSULTATIONS

FACE TO FACE ENGAGEMENT

1,582
people engaged

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

722
people engaged

POP-UPS



1,150
people

OPEN HOUSES



82
people

FORUM



350
people

ONLINE SURVEYS



40
people

STAKEHOLDERS



11
groups

WEBSITE VISITS



232
people

IDEA SPACE



1
person

#OPREVIEW



449
people



ENGAGEMENT AT A GLANCE

PHASE 2: BACKGROUND RESEARCH & POLICY DEVELOPMENT

JURISDICTIONAL REVIEW



12
cities around
the world
examined

URBAN DESIGN REFERENCE GROUP MEETING #1



18
participants

INTERVIEWS WITH CITY STAFF



20
participants

URBAN DESIGN REFERENCE GROUP MEETING #2



15
participants

INTER-DIVISIONAL REFERENCE GROUP WORKSHOP



19
participants

STAFF BUILT FORM POLICY DROP-INS



20
participants

What We Heard

The urban design policies in the OP need to be both prescriptive and flexible.

Some measurable standards should be incorporated into the policies to give them more strength.

Establish urban design elements and design criteria to make the city more walkable.

Consider the relationship between new buildings and the ground floor (scale); all buildings should be thoughtfully designed.

Increase the portion of public streets to be used for pedestrians and landscaping, rather than vehicles.

Public laneways should be recognized as an important element of the public realm.

Strengthen and clarify the role of streets as a public space that contribute to a comfortable pedestrian experience.

Public spaces need to be enhanced to be safe and inclusive, while meeting the needs of Toronto's diverse population.

Establish design policies for low-rise and mid-rise developments and identify how heights are allocated.

Public comfort should be protected. Factor seasonal changes in weather and sun/wind conditions into the design of public spaces.

POPS and public squares needs to be clearly defined. What role do they play in the public realm?

Connect parks and open spaces, particularly the ravine system, to create a network of public spaces throughout the City.

The Public Realm

The Official Plan currently describes the importance of the public realm in the non-policy text but doesn't provide a detailed description of the components or role of the public realm in the policy text. A key outcome of the public consultation was to describe the public realm in policy, including a description of the elements that make up the public realm, who it is for and what purpose it serves.

Section 3.1.1 New Policies 1, 2 & 3

The public realm is the fundamental organizing element of the city and its neighbourhoods, and plays an important role in supporting population growth, liveability, social equity and overall quality of life.



Policy 1 describes the public realm as a network of public and private spaces including streets, sidewalks and pedestrian connections, parks and open spaces, the public portions of civic buildings and other publicly owned and publicly accessible lands.

Policy 2 states that the City, together with its partners, will seek opportunities to expand and enhance the public realm.

Policy 3 establishes design criteria for the public realm to achieve a number of objectives, such as providing the organizing framework and setting for development, fostering complete, walkable communities, supporting active transportation and transit use, providing opportunities for recreation, and supporting quality of life for people of all ages and abilities.

Streets, Laneways & Walkability

The existing policies on streets and laneways have been enhanced in order to strengthen their role in helping to achieve complete communities, walkable neighbourhoods and a high quality of life. The draft policies aim to prioritize pedestrians, promote a walkable city, and provide connections to streets, parks and open spaces.

Section 3.1.1

New Policies 8, 9, 10 & 11

Revised Policies 12, 13, 14, 15

Public streets are a defining feature of the public realm. In addition to providing the organizing element of the City and its neighbourhoods, public streets are vitally important because they preserve access and connectivity to residents for essential public services and ensure that these public services can be provided in an efficient, safe and secure manner over the long term.



Policy 9 strengthens the existing policy intent by stating that all new streets will be public streets and will serve as the primary organizing element and access for new developments.

Policy 10 has been added to recognize laneways as an integral part of the public realm. The policy establishes the primary function of laneways as off-street access for vehicles and servicing, and considers opportunities for enhancements to promote safe and accessible movement for pedestrians and cyclists.

A number of policies in this section have been revised to promote the development of a walkable public realm, designed for all users. The draft changes address the need for appropriate sidewalk widths, integrating streets and laneways with existing street networks, minimizing block lengths, and providing direct paths of travel.

Trees and Natural Features

Section 3.1.1

New Policy 16; Revised Policy 17

The provision, maintenance and protection of trees and their growing spaces is essential to providing a safe, beautiful, resilient and comfortable public realm. The draft policy changes promote and protect a healthy and mature tree canopy.



Policy 16 has been added to address the importance of providing a healthy urban tree canopy. It requires that applications for development demonstrate how trees on these sites will be provided, maintained and protected.



Policy 17 has been expanded to enhance and protect the enjoyment of the City's natural features by improving their prominence and access from the public realm and limiting impacts from adjacent developments.

POPS & Public Squares

Section 3.1.1

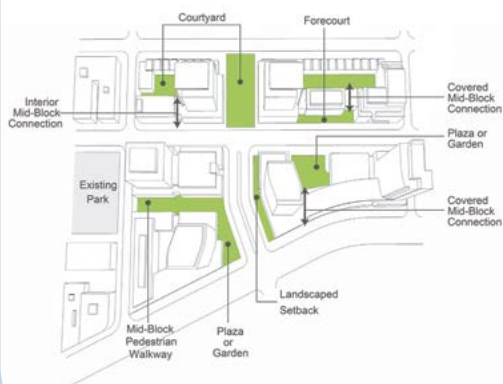
Revised Policy 19; New Policies 20 & 21

The new and revised policies in this section establish design criteria for new parks, public spaces, POPS and public squares, including:

- High visibility and significant street frontage
- Integration with the broader public realm
- Designed for all users
- Support a variety of programming

POPS (privately owned, publicly-accessible spaces) provide opportunities for expanding the public realm by creating new open space and connecting existing streets, parks and open spaces.

Public squares are a desirable form of open space because of their spaciousness, prominence and easy access. They provide a range of opportunities to enhance the daily lives of residents and workers.

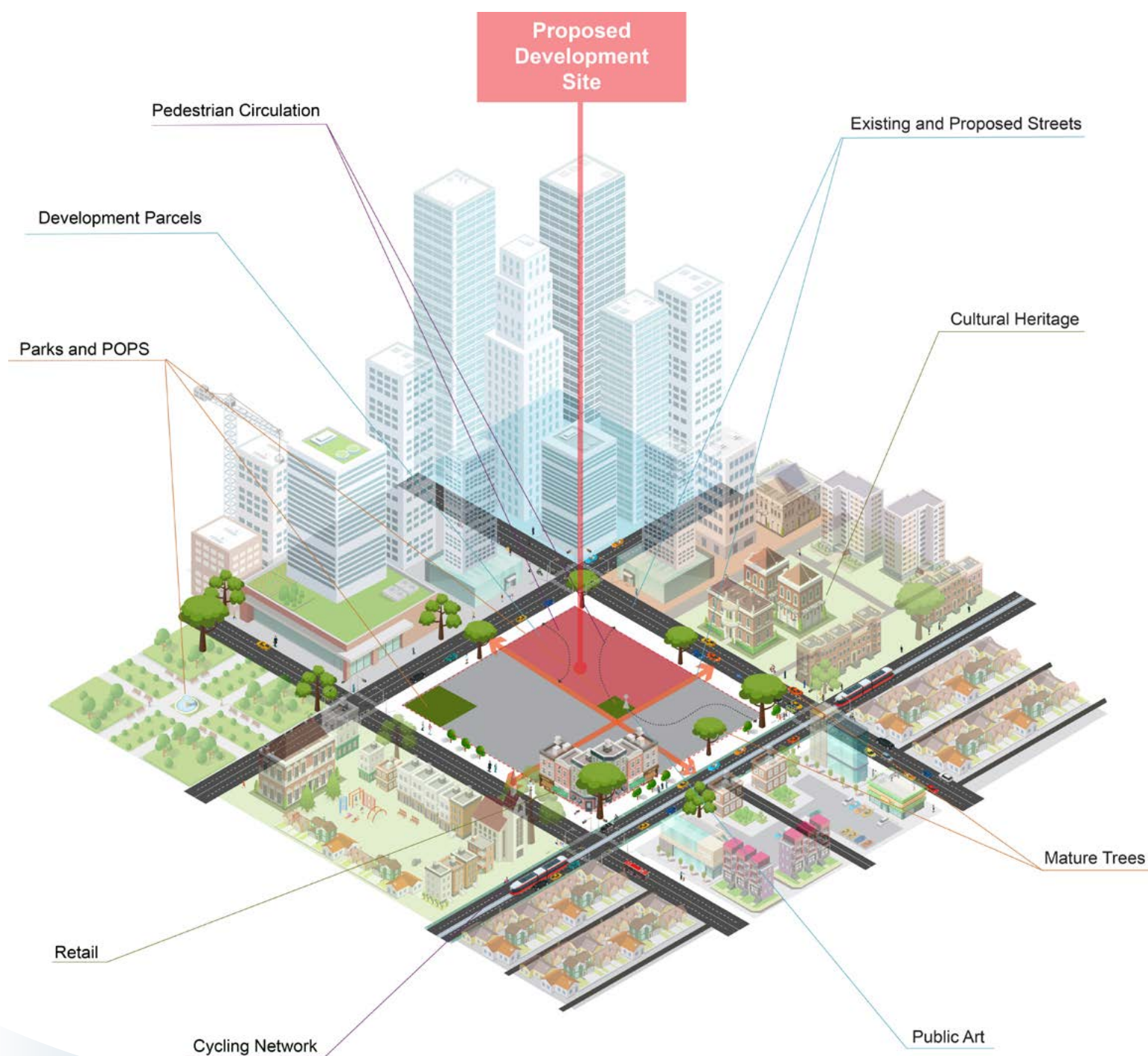


Policy 20 defines POPS as spaces which the public are invited to use, but which remain privately owned and maintained. POPS provide opportunities to expand the public realm but do not replace the need for new public parks and open spaces.

Policy 21 identifies public squares as social and civic gathering spaces that contribute to the public realm and provide opportunities for social interaction, entertainment, events and flexible programming.

Block Context Plan

A Block Context Plan is a new application requirement for certain development proposals that will illustrate the planned context for an area larger than the development site itself. It will ensure new developments enhance and contribute to the surrounding public realm, fit within the existing and planned built form context, and conform to the policies of the Official Plan.



Block Context Plan

When will a Block Context Plan be required?

Block Context Plans are meant for sites where opportunities for new public spaces, streets and other amenities exist and need to be planned for on a scale greater than the development site, or where the proposed built form is greater than expected and could benefit from an understanding of the broader organization and massing of the surrounding block.

Legend

-  Block Boundary
-  Development Site
-  Future Public Street
-  Potential Future Connection
-  Retail Street
-  Pedestrian Circulation
-  Cycling Network
-  Proposed Low-Rise Built Form
-  Proposed Mid-Rise Built Form
-  Proposed Tall Built Form
-  Existing Public Park
-  Proposed Public Park
-  POPS
-  Natural Features
-  Existing Mature Tree
-  New Trees
-  Cultural Heritage Resource
-  School Yard
-  Public Art
-  Transit Stop
-  Proposed Building Entrance



Built Form

Section 3.1.2

Revised Policies 1, 2 & 9

New Policies 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 & 11

Development must be conceived not only in terms of individual sites and buildings, but how those sites and buildings fit within the existing and planned context. New development should strengthen the relationship between built form and the public realm by supporting, improving and limiting impacts on adjacent streets, parks and open spaces.



Policies 1 & 2 have been modified to emphasize the role that site design plays in contributing to the safety, attractiveness and use of the public realm. In particular, they reinforce how new development should frame and support adjacent streets, parks, open spaces and mature trees.



Policy 7 recognizes that heritage resources should be celebrated and made prominent through the careful design of new buildings.



Policy 3 establishes the importance of good street proportion and establishes criteria to enhance pedestrian conditions, such as sun and wind, on the public realm.

Policies 4, 5 & 6 require development to recognize and provide built form transitions in scale, limit overlook and provide access to natural light, and reinforce proportion, materiality, rhythm and fit with adjacent buildings.

Built Form

Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Building

Section 3.1.3; New Policies 2 & 3

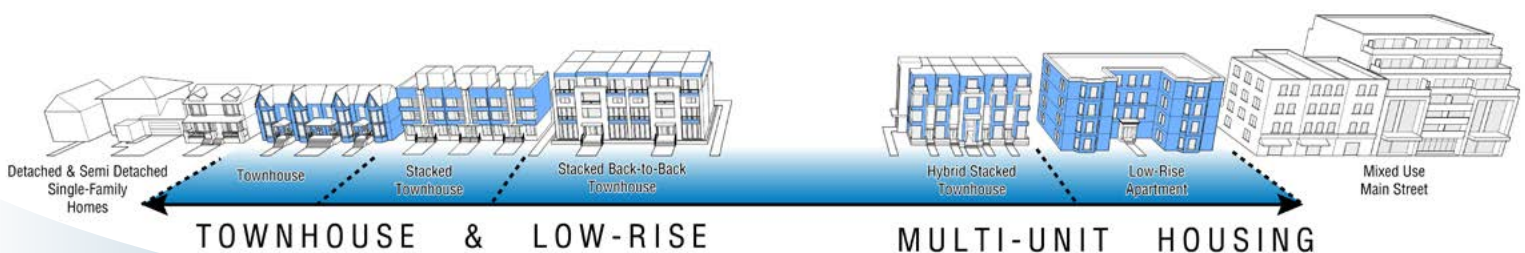
Where appropriate, permitted and compatible with the area context and prevailing building types, townhouse and low-rise apartment buildings can increase the range of housing types and provide grade-related housing in a form that is more intensive than single- and semi-detached houses.



Policy 2 establishes a maximum height of four storeys for townhouses and low-rise apartments.

Policy 3 establishes additional design criteria for townhouses and low-rise apartment buildings, including: providing entrances that have direct access from public streets, pedestrian mews and walkways.

Policy 3 establishes that townhouses and low-rise apartment buildings will be designed to integrate with existing grades on site, and ensure access to sunlight for the public realm and ground floor units.



Built Form

Mid-Rise Buildings

Section 3.1.3; New Policies 4 & 5

Mid-rise buildings are a form of development of moderate scale which provides a transition and relationship to streets, parks and open spaces. They help establish and reinforce an urban environment and support transit infrastructure while maintaining an open view to the sky and good access to sunlight from the public realm.



Policy 5 provides design criteria for determining the appropriate height of mid-rise buildings, including: providing a streetwall height consistent with the existing or planned context, maintaining good street proportion and access to skyview, and providing articulation and massing to break up long building façades and fit with local character.

Policy 4 establishes the height of mid-rise buildings as greater than four storeys with a maximum height generally equal to the width of the right-of-way that they front onto.



Built Form

Tall Buildings



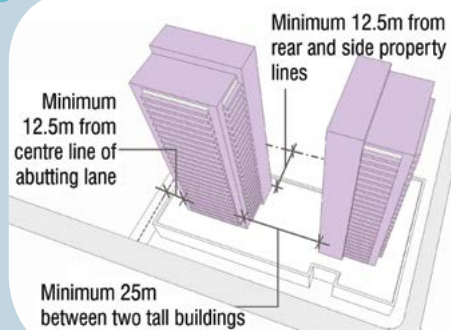
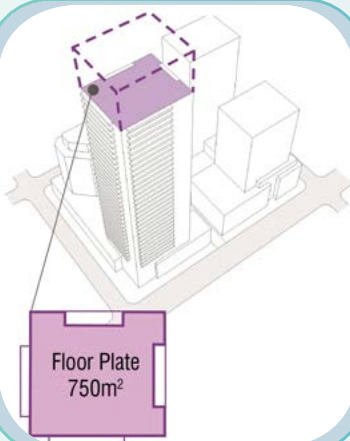
Tall buildings consist of 3 carefully integrated parts: base, a middle and a top.

Policy 8 expands on current policies and provides more detailed design criteria for each tower part to ensure that tall buildings:

- fit harmoniously within the existing context
- contribute to good street proportion and an enhanced public realm
- mitigate shadow and wind impacts on pedestrians
- contribute to a cohesive skyline

Section 3.1.3. New Policies 2 & 3

Tall buildings are an intensive form of development that come with both opportunities and challenges. When the quality of architecture and site design is emphasized, tall buildings can become important city landmarks, help to define the City's structure, and contribute to the skyline. However, not every site is appropriate for a tall building. Tall buildings should only be considered where they can fit into the existing or planned context.



Policies 7 & 8 introduce three key measures into the Official Plan to help determine the suitability of a proposed tall building on a site:

1. Towers will be no less than 25 metres apart
2. Towers will have a minimum 12.5 metre setback from the side and rear lot lines
3. Residential tower floor plates should be no larger than 750m²