



MULTIPLEX STUDY – DRAFT OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT

Released for Consultation – May 2022

This document provides an annotated reader’s guide to the draft Official Plan Amendment developed through the EHON Multiplex Study, to explain the intent and purpose of the proposed policy changes. Draft policies are shown in unshaded text, and shaded text provides an explanation for the proposed changes that follow. The City’s Official Plan can be found here:

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>

The Official Plan Amendment is proposed to be structured as a Site and Area-Specific Policy (SASP), located in Chapter 7 of the Official Plan. The SASP would apply to all lands within the city that have a *Neighbourhoods* land use designation, as shown in yellow on Official Plan Maps 13-23.

We anticipate that ongoing work through EHON and the Municipal Comprehensive Review may result in future changes to Official Plan policies pertaining to *Neighbourhoods*. The changes below are being introduced now to facilitate the creation of multiplexes in the near term.

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

1. Chapter 7, Site and Area Specific Policies, is amended by adding Site and Area Specific Policy No. XXX for all lands designated *Neighbourhoods*, as follows:

"XXX. Multiplexes in *Neighbourhoods*.

Section 4.1.5 of the Official Plan outlines the criteria for development in *Neighbourhoods*. This statement is intended to clarify that multiplexes are a permitted building type in all *Neighbourhoods*, subject to the criteria that follow in subsection b) below.

Despite section 4.1.5, multiplexes are permitted in *Neighbourhoods*, subject to the following policies:

This text provides a definition for the term “multiplex”, consistent with the City-wide Zoning By-law.

- a) For the purposes of this Site and Area Specific Policy, a "multiplex" refers to a duplex, triplex, or fourplex, as defined by zoning by-law 569-2013.
- b) Development of multiplexes:

The following policies are similar to those found in Section 4.1.5 of the Official Plan, which are intended to guide the development or redevelopment of buildings in *Neighbourhoods*. Certain changes are proposed to facilitate the creation of multiplexes in *Neighbourhoods*:

(see next page)

- Development will respect and reinforce the planned physical character of geographic neighbourhoods, as well as the existing character. Generally speaking, the existing character of any given area refers to



what is there now, while the planned character refers to what is intended in the future. In *Neighbourhoods*, it is intended that multiplexes will continue to be built to the same general scale and zoning standards for low-rise buildings.

- The development criteria for multiplexes (listed as a) through f) below) does not include “prevailing building types” as an element to consider in the existing context of a neighbourhood. Multiplexes do not currently exist in many neighbourhoods because they have historically not been permitted, and therefore cannot be shown to be a “prevailing building type”. Deleting this criterion removes a policy barrier that stands in the way of multiplexes.

- i. will respect and reinforce the existing and planned physical character of each geographic neighbourhood, including in particular:
 - a) patterns of streets, blocks and lanes, parks and public building sites;
 - b) prevailing size and configuration of lots;
 - c) prevailing setbacks of buildings from the street or streets;
 - d) prevailing patterns of rear and side yard setbacks and landscaped open space;
 - e) continuation of special landscape or built-form features that contribute to the unique physical character of the geographic neighbourhood; and
 - f) conservation of heritage buildings, structures and landscapes.

Our research shows that some families are already living in dwelling units with not enough bedrooms for all household members, and that there are not enough multiple-bedroom units being provided to meet future demand. So, it is important that multiplexes are designed to provide housing options for all types of households, including families with children or other multi-member households. This policy encourages, but does not require, the inclusion of at least one unit in a multiplex that can accommodate larger households. See the proposed sidebar below for clarification on what is meant by “large units”.

- ii. is encouraged to include large units, and should include at least one unit that contains multiple bedrooms;

This policy is intended to support the creation of units that provide physical accessibility to accommodate a range of needs.

- iii. is encouraged to provide universal physical access for units on the ground floor;

The entrance to a unit in a multiplex should be safe, with visible and easy pedestrian access from the street. This policy would allow for more than one entrance to the building, whether at the front, side or rear.

- iv. must provide entrances that are safely accessible from the street, which may be located at the front, side or rear of the building;

The development of multiplexes should not result in a significant reduction of green spaces on a property. The front and back yards on a lot should consist of mainly soft landscaping (planting such as



grass, trees, shrubs, but not hard surfaces), with minimum percentages to be specified in the zoning by-law.

- v. will maximize contiguous soft landscaping within front and rear yard setbacks that is supportive of expanding the urban tree canopy through tree planting;

This policy is intended to support the protection of existing healthy trees in neighbourhoods and reinforces the City's tree by-law.

- vi. should not result in the injury or removal of a healthy tree protected under Municipal Code Chapters 608, 658, and 813 on the subject property and adjacent properties;

All new development should strive to be built with environmentally-friendly practices and technologies. This policy extends that goal to multiplexes up to four units, which are not otherwise subject to the Toronto Green Standard.

- vii. is encouraged to include sustainable building practices such as green roof areas, solar panels, fossil fuel-free heating systems, and low carbon building materials;

Any residential building, including multiplexes, can reduce its carbon footprint by reusing materials in construction. This policy encourages the retention of buildings, including heritage buildings, to promote sustainable building practices.

- viii. is encouraged to salvage and reuse existing building materials and/or foundations and minimize below-grade floor area in new construction to reduce material carbon emissions associated with new development;

Multiplex units should be livable, with appropriate relationships between units both on the property itself and to neighbouring lots.

- ix. will limit privacy impacts between adjacent dwelling units;

This policy is proposed to provide an incentive for multiplexes to be created. It would allow for more building area where there will be additional units within the permitted zoning envelope, than what would be permitted for a single-unit house with secondary suite. This is meant to ensure that additional floor area is directed to the provision of more housing opportunities.

- c) Zoning by-laws may permit additional density for multiplexes which include more than two dwelling units.



There may be some existing Secondary Plans or Site and Area Specific Policies that currently would not permit multiplexes in *Neighbourhoods*. This policy is to clarify that this SASP will prevail over other policies so that multiplexes may be permitted in all *Neighbourhoods*.

- d) Where there is a conflict between this Site and Area Specific Policy xxx and either a Secondary Plan or another Site and Area Specific Policy in Chapter 7, this Site and Area Specific Policy will prevail.

The Official Plan includes sidebars that provide further explanation for terms or ideas referred to in policy. Sidebars are not policy, but offer more details and/or clarification on what is intended by the policy text.

SIDEBAR - Large units

The term “large units” refers to two and three bedroom units. These units are designed, to meet the needs of household compositions such as families with children, multi-generational families, seniors with home care or groups of unrelated students and/or adults who choose to live together. The provision of large units will ultimately benefit a diversity of household compositions.

This action adds a note to the Maps in the Official Plan that indicate where existing Site and Area Specific Policies apply across the city. The note will direct readers to this SASP to indicate that these policies will also apply to *Neighbourhoods*.

- 2. Maps 24 to 34 inclusive, Site and Area Specific Policies (Key Maps) are amended by adding the following Note:

"See Site and Area Specific Policy xxx regarding multiplex permissions for lots designated as *Neighbourhoods*."

The sidebar found on Page 4-5 of the Official Plan speaks about prevailing building types and lot patterns in *Neighbourhoods*. The text of that sidebar currently says that if an existing zoning by-law permits only single detached dwellings, then the Plan’s policies are to be interpreted to allow only single detached dwellings. However, approximately two-thirds of the city’s *Neighbourhoods* currently have this zoning, which would not allow multiplexes to be built. Until the City is able to amend the zoning to permit multiplexes in all Residential zones, in order to meet the goal of expanding housing options, that text is proposed to be deleted.

- 3. The sidebar in Chapter 4 on Page 4-5 is amended to read:

Prevailing Lot Patterns

Policies 4.1.9 and 4.1.10 are not to be interpreted so as to encourage, facilitate or justify the assembly of lots within a geographic neighbourhood that adhere to the prevailing lot pattern in that neighbourhood for the purpose of intensification.