



Neighbourhoods and Complete Communities - Policy Focused Public Meeting Summary

Date & Time: June 22, 2022, 5:00 - 7:00pm

Total Registrants: 182

Total Participants: 60

Location: WebEx Virtual Event

Project Team Attendees:

City of Toronto – Jeff Cantos, Janani Mahendran, Phillip Parker, Dan Godin, Lillian D’Souza, Gerry Rogalski, Jason Tsang
Dillon Consulting – Kristin Lillyman, Ying Ye, Ish Chowdhury

Dillon Consulting, the independent facilitation team retained by the City of Toronto, facilitated the meeting and prepared this summary. Participants were encouraged to provide additional feedback to the project team through continued conversations and outreach with the Dillon and City team. This summary is intended to reflect the key discussion points from the meeting and is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

1.0 Meeting Overview

On June 22, 2022, the City of Toronto Official Plan (OP) Team and Dillon Consulting Engagement Team hosted a policy focused meeting on neighbourhoods and complete communities. This virtual meeting provided an overview the Official Plan and an overview of Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) initiative. It also included feedback and input from the public, outlined the next steps and upcoming opportunities to engage. The format included a presentation, Q&A, polling questions, and the active use of the chat function to guide discussions.

This was the second of three policy focused public meetings to dive deeper into a specific subject matter. The meeting focused on the following items:

1. Official Plan Refresher and Draft 2051 Vision Statement and Directions
2. Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) initiative
3. Wrap-up and Next Steps

A copy of the presentation is included on the Our Plan website.

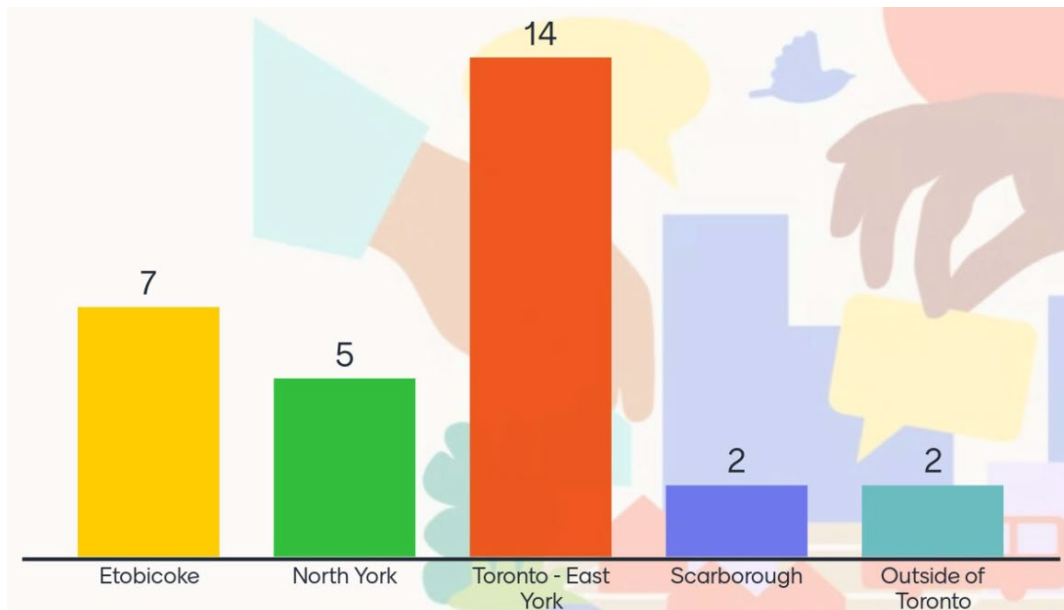


2.0 Polling Questions

As part of the public meeting, questions were prepared and provided to participants in the form of a poll through Mentimeter. Participants were able to log in through their phones, tablets and computers to engage through either the link or a QR Code. This provided an interactive means to engage participants in real-time and allowed others to gain insight to the data.

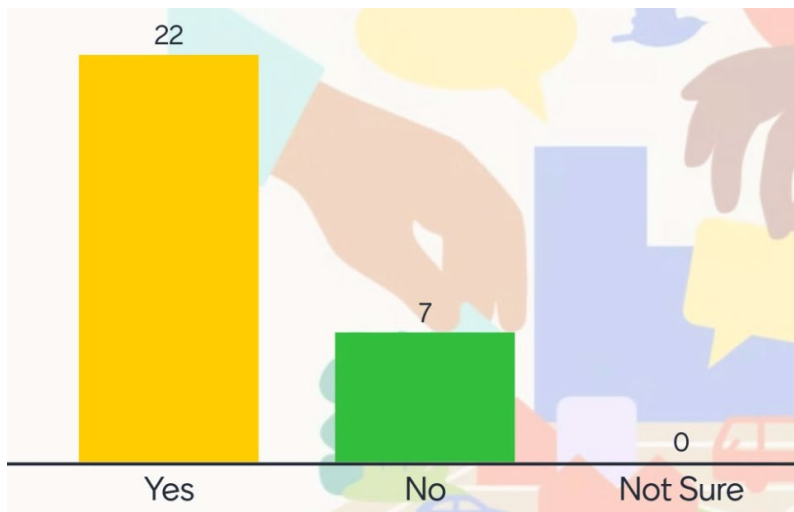
1. Where are you participating from?

30 participants contributed with 47% from Toronto – East York, 23% from Etobicoke, 17% from North York, and 7% each from Scarborough and Outside of Toronto.



2. Have you participated in other Our Plan Toronto engagement activities?

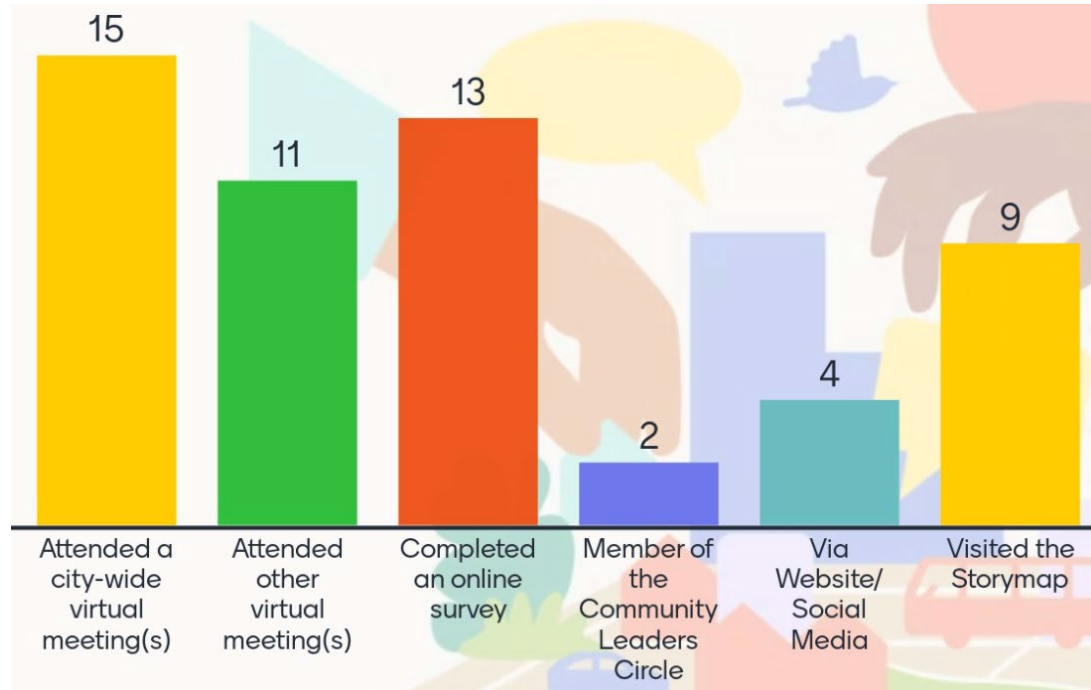
29 participants contributed with 76% having attended previously, and 24% being their first time.





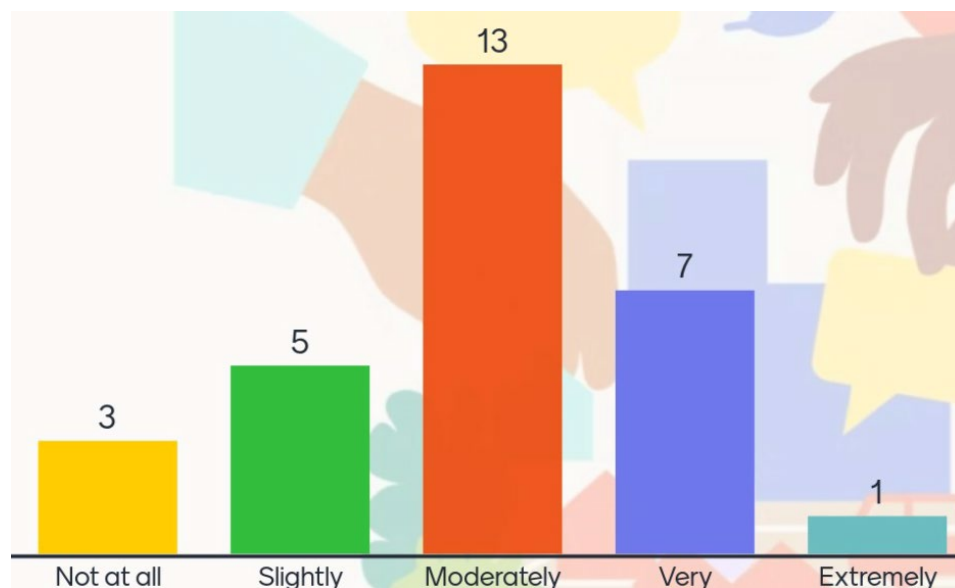
3. How did you previously participate?

22 participants contributed with 68% attended a city-wide virtual meeting(s), 59% completed an online survey, 50% attended other virtual meeting(s), 41% visited the Storymap, 18% via website/social media, and 9% were members of the Community Leaders Circle.



4. How familiar are you with the Toronto Official Plan?

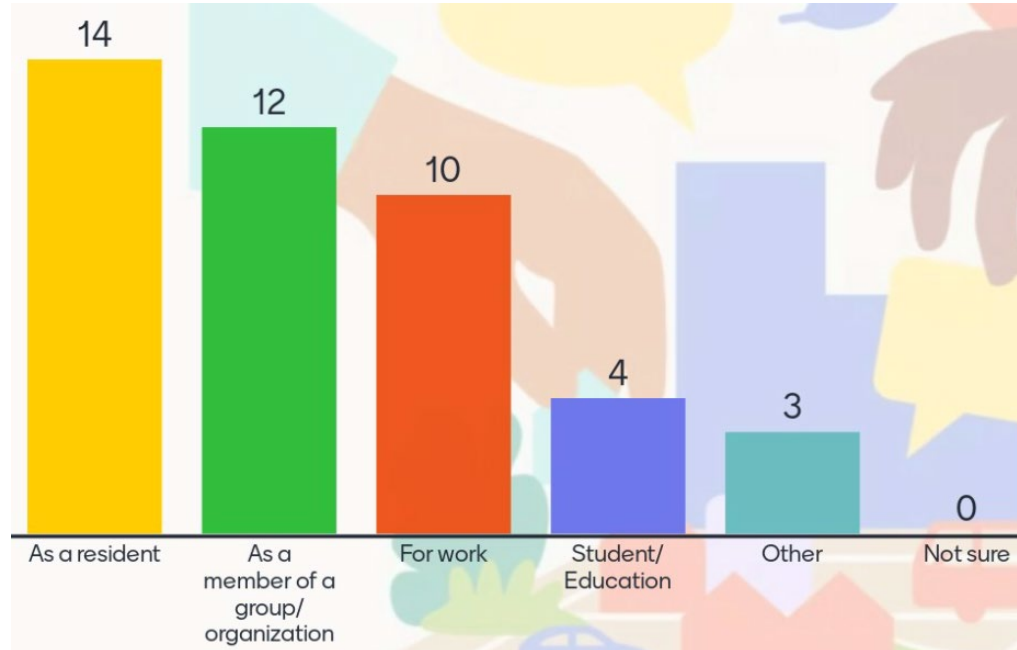
29 participants contributed with 66% being moderate, 24% being very, 17% being slightly, 10% to not at all, and 3% to extremely familiar.





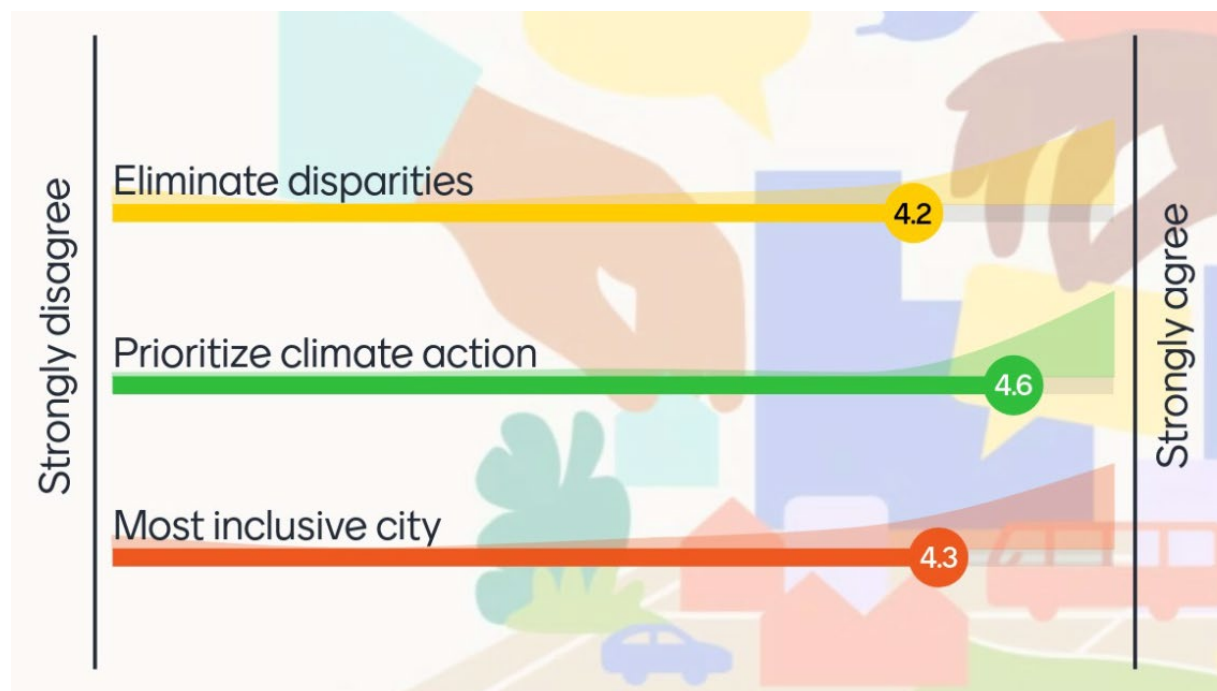
5. How do you currently use the Toronto Official Plan?

28 participants contributed with 50% as a resident, 43% as a member of a group/organization, 36% for work, 14% as student/education, and 11% as other.



6. How supportive are you of the Official Plan Vision?

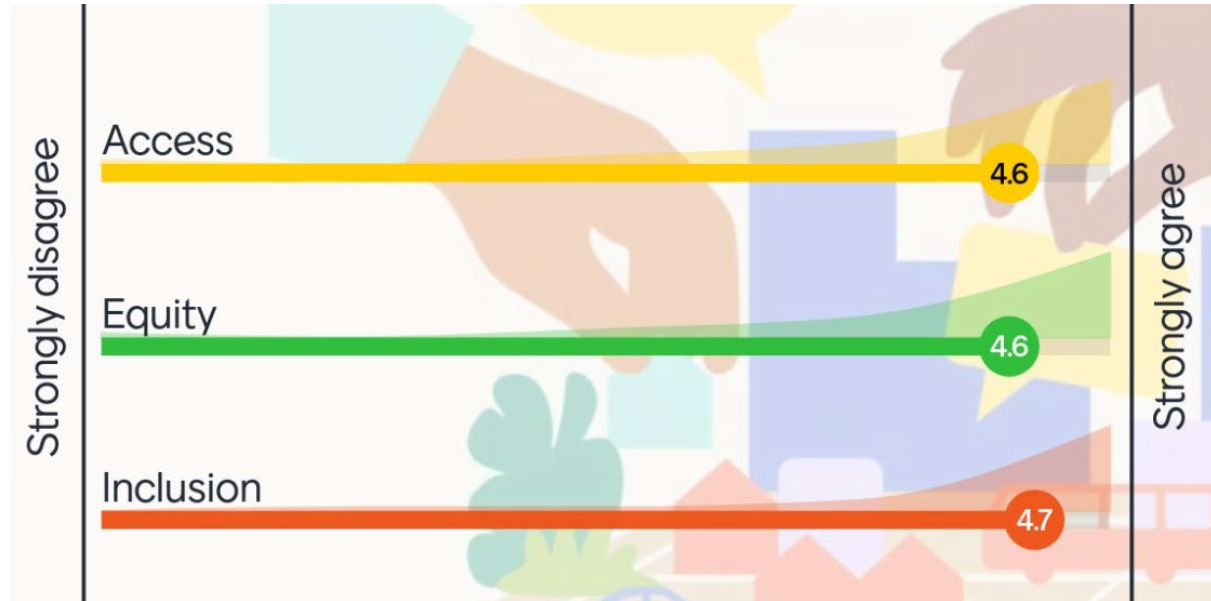
30 participants contributed with 4.2 to eliminating disparities, 4.6 to prioritizing climate action, and 4.3 to being the most inclusive.





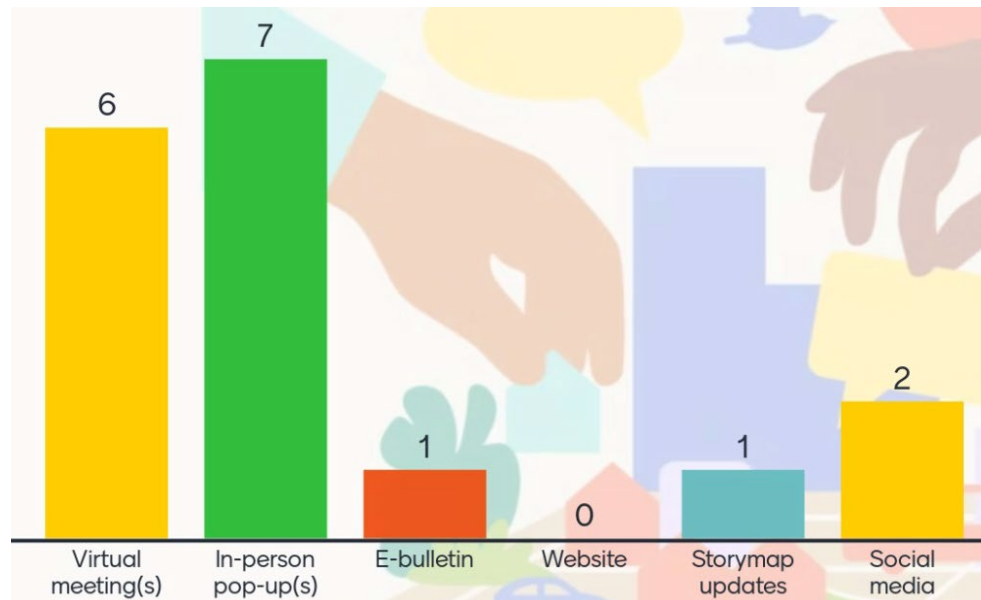
7. How supportive are you of the Official Plan Principles?

29 participants contributed with 4.6 to access, 4.6 to equity, and 4.7 to inclusion.



8. How would you like to continue to stay involved with Our Plan Toronto?

17 participants contributed with 41% preferring in-person pop-up(s), 35% virtual meeting(s), 12% through social media, and 6% each to e-bulletin and storymap updates.





3.0 Summary of Facilitated Q&A Discussion

Throughout the presentation and between sections, attendees were provided the opportunity to ask questions. Contributions were provided by participants through a mix of verbal and written questions and commentary pertaining to issues and ideas discussed. This summary is intended to reflect the key discussion points and is not intended to be a verbatim transcript. Participant questions and comments appear in bold text followed by responses shared by the project team when responses were provided.

Summary of discussion on Official Plan refresher and Vision Statement and Directions:

There are quite a few applications in various stages of approval throughout the City of Toronto. How many units and how many people will this accommodate that are already in the City's pipeline? I.e. what is the exact gap between now and 2051?

- As of the end of 2021, there were 162,757 units with approvals, and 246,769 units under review. The City would need all of those units to be built, as well as, 41,207 more to achieve 2051 Growth Plan minimum Targets. See Table 14 in the Development Pipeline 2021. [Toronto City Planning - Development Pipeline 2021](#)
- However, there is a mismatch in the type of units being built. The city is experiencing a supply gap in ground-related units such as semi-detached, duplexes, triplexes, and low rise apartments. More information on this will be included in the Land Needs Assessment report going to July 5th Planning and Housing Committee.

The development pipeline does include approved units that are probably not economically feasible to build anymore with rising construction costs without further zoning amendments. Which makes the assumption that all those units will be built in a strong market in my opinion.

- That's correct. Some of those units will get built, while others with approvals will be abandoned. Generally, in the past few decades, we find that new applications come in which make up the units that are abandoned.

What exactly is going to the Planning and Housing Committee of July 5th?

- The July 5th Planning and Housing Committee will include 3 EHON Reports - The Multiplex Final Proposals Report, the Neighbourhood Retail and Services Phase 1 Final Report, and the Major Streets Interim Report. The full agenda will be published on the City Clerks website on June 28th, 1 week prior to the meeting. [The City of Toronto Council and Committees](#).
- There will also be a final report for 115 Major Transit Station Areas, and a report with Employment Policy updates and Employment Conversion Requests.



If the official plan and the zoning bylaw conflict, which one wins? Can the official plan be given teeth so that zoning that doesn't achieve the goals is invalid?

- The City is required to amend the zoning by-law to implement the Official Plan once the official plan amendments are approved. Applications to amend the zoning by-law to permit a proposal are required to conform to the Official Plan policies.

The website is really confusing. Are you revising chapter 3 and policies like the demolition/rental replacement policy? Housing isn't mentioned explicitly in the website at all, yet it seems like up-zoning the yellowbelt is on the table, yet is not mentioned in the Our Plan Toronto website.

- The EHON work to expand housing permissions in the Neighbourhoods is a concurrent and related piece of the Official Plan Review work.

Will there be action items / actionable commitments the City will make to outline how they will achieve those goals?

- Chapter 1 of the Official Plan outlines aspirational goals and visions of the future for Toronto 2051. The intent of this chapter is to inform Toronto's land use decisions. Regarding actionable commitment, this is how these goals are implemented. There currently are a number of actionable plans such as the Reconciliation Action Plan and the Poverty Reduction Plan. If these goals and visions are to be adopted by City Council, future decision making can be informed by them.

How are you going to ensure confidence in the Official Plan?

- We as professional planners have been and continue to listen to what the priorities are. We, as planners, are the recommenders and not the decision makers. We'll bring forward the input we received and the priorities we've heard about to decision makers in hopes to get it adopted in early 2023.

I'm unclear about what is on the table/being reviewed through this process. The entire official plan? Or only chapter 1?

- The Official Plan review is a bit complex and there are multiple components of our Official Plan. The environment and climate change amendment were adopted by Council on May 31st. Also, on the table are the new requirements by the Province to Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) and Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs). The City has 160 of them, and will bring forward 115 of them to Planning and Housing Committee on July 5th. Looking to employment lands and the future of work, this is another big component of the Official Plan that speaks to employment area conversions and recommended policies will be presented to Committee on July 5th too.



Where does food access and indigenous and black food sovereignty (e.g. access to land for food growing) fit in the updated OP?

- From the indigenous planning perspective, this belongs at the beginning of Chapter 1 in the Official Plan; there will be a section on First Nations, Inuit and Metis planning perspectives. With how it gets implemented, there will be a section about what placemaking and placekeeping is and how we can achieve it. Language will be taken from the City's recently adopted Reconciliation Action Plan and this will help inform land use decisions for placemaking and placekeeping.
- Chapter 1 acts as the ingredients to a successful inclusive city. Access to food, knowing that the City has food deserts, is one we can jot down to ensure that access to fresh food should be a priority for the City as a vision. How that gets translated into site specific area can be through land use decisions when an application comes in.

Summary of discussion on Expanding Housing and Neighborhood Options (EHON):

Is the EHON multiplex OPA going to Planning and Housing Committee on July 5th or is it a progress report with the OPA next year?

- It's an interim report with the draft OPA. Final report will be in Q1 2023.

What are you doing to encourage multiplex housing? What is it you're considering for density incentives?

- The City hasn't landed on the exact zoning permissions and how we would incentivize multiplexes yet, that will come in the first quarter of 2023. The first step is to enable them where they are not permitted today. Having heard feedback regarding larger single unit homes, this may need to be de-incentivized and can include a sort of down-zoning where you're only allowed to get the maximum floor space index (FSI) if you're building more units.

Why not allow for more height in multiunit buildings?

- We are looking at some minor adjustments to height limits, and deferring to local neighborhood heights as part of the Official Plan Amendment; we're not intending to do a city-wide up-zoning of four-storeys everywhere.

Maybe there are places where you can either slightly extend the mixed use areas or downscale the main streets themselves so you're not longer allowing 5-6 storeys directly on the main streets.

What are your thoughts on how permitting multiplexes fits into making the City the most inclusive by 2051?

- EHON initiatives, such as adding multiplex permission to all neighbourhoods city-wide, are about opening up 70% of the City that are not currently accessible to a large chunk of the City's population. While these aren't solutions to our City's housing crisis, these are



small steps to begin to create a more equitable city, and create more of a housing supply in neighbourhoods that have been subject to exclusionary zoning.

- EHON is just one part of the broader set of initiatives under what the City is doing. With the Housing Strategy, there are initiatives such as the multi-tenant housing permissions, Inclusionary Zoning, short term rental by-law, along with rapid and modular housing projects.

How does the City study the impacts of new housing units and density on traffic and safety? How does the City look at proposals for new housing in relation to some of the transportation on the ground?

- Looking at the complete community picture, by adding the neighbourhood retail and services, the intention was not to add more traffic, but to create walkable communities that are not as auto dependant. There are a number of suburban areas, where the makeup of the community can change by adding amenities such as grocery stores, coffee shops and daycares. Also, by building along major streets where existing bus transit lines already operate. One of the goals of the TransformTO Net Zero Strategy is to reduce private automobile dependency. In order to do this, we need to direct growth towards underutilized transit stations.

Can we substitute the designation from apartments to complete communities?

- Through new development, we can identify how to make a community complete. This can be done through local area studies, community service and facilities assessments and require developments to submit the necessary studies as part of a zoning application. It's not about designating or identifying an area to be a complete community, but figuring out what makes it incomplete. Then it's a matter of filling in the gaps be it through partnering with developers or with staff recommendations to City Council.

If we agree that retail in neighbourhoods makes them more livable, is there a reason not to allow retail construction in residential zoning? I could see only permitting retail on corner lots and then adjacent to retail to allow slow growth of small retail enclaves.

- Yes, that's what the Neighbourhood retail and services team is looking to do - adding these uses to lands designated Neighbourhoods. The specific locations will be specified in the draft Zoning by-law coming in 2023.

If the City is trying to reduce dependency on cars, then why are they insisting that garages be built in new houses?

- As of November 2021, the City has removed the parking minimums in new developments, with the goal to reduce auto dependency. The Parking by-law is currently under appeal and not fully in force. Once the appeal is settled the changes will come into effect.
[The City of Toronto, Review of Parking Requirements for New Development](#)



Is the plan for the City to specify the permitted lots for neighbourhood retail or allow for organic growth?

- In the first phase, the team has proposed to create an Official Plan amendment that opens up the possibilities for new retail. While the zoning by-law amendment has not come forward at this time, people can propose retail through a minor variance. There are no specific lots that are being assigned, but it's generally all the residential lots in the City. A piece that is coming forward in July is related to home occupation, and the uses for those specific uses. There are currently a limited number of them, ranging from seamstress and hairdressers but in 2023 those uses are proposed to be further expanded.

I don't understand why we would want to open up neighbourhood retail organically, when there are empty storefronts.

- The idea is to create an equitable approach for all neighbourhoods across the City. As part of EHON, it aligns with neighborhoods that don't have avenues or walkable communities; in these cases, storefronts aren't as easily accessible. This is just one way of expanding home occupations to uses such as hairdressers. This is simply adding an option for people by introducing amenities and expanding permissions.

Will there be more inclusive and accessible engagement processes, especially in secondary planning, to engage community members who speak English as a second language?

- Reaching communities and Torontonians who otherwise aren't able to join us is a big priority for the City. One example that we hope to use as a best practice moving forward, is Our Plan Toronto, having gone through this process virtually from the beginning of COVID. One thing we prioritized was reaching marginalized communities, and this was done through creating the Community Leader Circle. We brought together about 40 community leaders across the city, who work with these marginalized communities. We provide them an honorarium to meet with us, talk about the process we're undertaking, and they then talk to their networks. So, we hope this approach can be used in the secondary planning process moving forward.

Once we're done with this round of consultation, what's the process to consider additional changes to our Official Plan? Things such as improving accessibility for housing, or allowing for four storeys as an example.

- We're using the requirements of the Municipal Comprehensive Review to update parts of the Official Plan that we think needs tinkering, despite the Province not requiring it. The EHON work is a separate initiative that is not required by the Province, but is on a parallel process with the MCR to make Toronto the most inclusive city in the world. The Province requires us to review certain things every five years, and the work still continues. City planning understands that challenges change presents, and the Official Plan also has to change to follow suit.



What is happening as far as strengthening tree protection with the desire to increase things like density and EHON?

- We're not changing the tree protection by-law, and we understand it may not be strong enough, but as we noted in the past, zoning does not preclude urban forestry from declining tree removal permits. We have an internal working group that is working to promote neighbourhood intensification, while also protecting urban forestry.

What kind of research are you doing to ensure that policy change will actually produce the result you're promising? Are you considering measures like conditional up-zoning that will only allow additional density if affordable housing is provided? (See Austin, Cambridge, Portland as examples)

- Currently, the Province of Ontario does not allow municipalities to apply "conditional zoning". Although the Planning Act includes it as a tool for cities (called zoning with conditions), the Province has to release the conditions that cities can apply - before we can apply them. The City has requested that the Province set out those conditions so we can apply it.

In our experience, developers are not building multiplexes where they are permitted, just large single family homes. How do you ensure that up-zoning as you recommend will not just result in large houses with no density, or worse yet, land speculation, which we also see regularly?

- In this phase of work, staff are simply opening up the possibility to new neighbourhood retail and services. We cannot restrict the types of retail through zoning. That said, staff will be doing more work on where retail permissions may be appropriate when drafting the city-wide zoning by-law amendment that will come forward in 2023.

So, to clarify, conditional up-zoning is not permitted yet. But could be if approved by the province?

- Yes, that is correct. Technically - the Province must set out the conditions that a City can apply. The Province does this through (what is known as) a Regulation. We are waiting for that Regulation.

Was this house in the example built as of right or were their variances?

- This house has not been built, it is demonstration of a triplex on a suburban Toronto lot.

How do you ensure that the new multiplexes would actually be "affordable" for lower/moderate income households?

- The City has previously added affordable rental programs where homeowners can be granted a forgivable grant up to \$50,000 and in exchange, they provide the new units at below market rents for 15 years.



Where is the City at in terms of its study of 4-storey and 6-storey walk-up apartments in Neighbourhoods?

- This is part of the EHON work on Major Streets. There will be more shared in the Interim report coming forward in July, and more to come in 2023.

Rather than 4 stories everywhere, I would propose an additional 4 or 5m on top of local zoning for 3-4 unit buildings.

- Noted, thank you for the feedback. We'll be looking into the heights in more detail during the rest of 2022.

How is a multiplex going to "open up" those areas when there is no requirement that those units be affordable? In Vancouver, single units in a duplex are now being sold for the same price as a single family home in the same neighbourhood.

- Multiplexes likely will not be affordable to all, but they do add options, which don't currently exist today. EHON it's just one part of the City's housing initiatives that are ongoing.

Think my question was also missed, will there be incentives in place to protect renters and encourage rental housing as part of the Neighbourhood multiplexes?

- We're looking at incentives and fee reductions for multiplexes and we're considering whether we can tie them to affordability requirements. Working through those details in the rest of 2022.

Summary of questions/comments from the chat:

- Are you assuming that there is currently sufficient housing to say that those new units would meet the growth targets? Don't we need to hit the target as well as fill the existing gap?
- Can we relax single family zoning?
- How do we reconcile the draft visions with exclusionary zoning in our neighbourhoods and regulatory capture by resident associations and homeowners?
- Can OP allow mid-rise to be more competitive vs high rise? Can we relax some design guidelines on buildings?
- What happens when OP undershoots growth estimates? What contingencies are there to make sure demand does not cause skyrocketing housing prices?
- Trying to focus on complete village community / masterplan. Example designation like Apartments in the Official Plan I think is old school. Can you replace with complete village/community to be all inclusive live, work, play and walkable? I see many disparities and I think as a layperson these designations in the Official Plan need to be looked at.
- As the City concentrates on intensification and density which I guess becomes a group of compact villages expanding complete village approach I think so far is not prevalent in the plan that I see so far as a layperson ...expanding housing options into neighbourhoods also goes with other ancillary uses like live work spaces etc.
- Is there a consideration in the Plan to monitor the use and growth of all modes of transportation as population and density increases, to identify areas where a shift in the



modes can be seen? And accordingly take action to prioritize active modes of transportation over private use of vehicles.

- Are there any limitations to small scale retail? Are Cafes and cannabis shops included?
- How is the growth going to be directed to areas of the City where school enrollment is flat or declining?
- Just because zoning says "multiplexes permitted" does not mean surrounding regulations actually make it economically feasible to build a multiplex. If triplexes are technically permitted, but only if it's two floors, that doesn't mean multiplexes are permitted.
- Single-unit homes by developers are going much beyond the 17 metres and are approved at CoA, leading to a much larger one-family home at an exorbitant price.
- New townhouses on Avenue Road are being advertised as luxury or ultra-luxury - not helping with affordability.
- Portland reduced the maximum size of single family homes while increasing the size of multi-unit homes permitted per lot as a way to de-incentivize creation of monster homes and incentivize multiplexes. This seems like a good idea to me.
- We need to prefer multiplexes over large luxury single family homes. Legalizing multiplexes and ending luxury RD zoning is a huge step forward.
- Giving preference to more attainable multiplex units over luxury single family homes is also good.
- Developers routinely ask for something beyond what is in the by-law or OP.
- I think it is normal for developers asking for something beyond what is in the by-law or OP. Some parts of zoning and the OP are so out of date, that they are not even compliant with the human rights code. See 175 Cummer for example.
- Why not allow more height for multi-unit buildings? Keeping the single family heights makes the projects largely impractical. The vast majority of the city won't see any missing middle development with the existing height limits.
- Although the initiative makes sense in some areas one still has to consider the effects on a street that has single family dwellings. The extra traffic, more problems with neighbours etc. - it really needs to be done in areas where there is sufficient land and space between houses.
- How are you studying the impacts of these new housing units and density on traffic and ensuring the streets can continue to be used safely by all, including cyclists? How are these new developments placed in relation to transit stations?
- Members of the Committee of Adjustment who allow so many variances, who permit trees and greenery to be destroyed, should be given better guidance and should align with the City's vision, rather with a developer trying to maximize profit.
- Will there be corresponding renter's protection along with up-zoning? The concern is that developers use rezoning and demolition as effective renovation/demolitions of renters, as a work-around to rent control. Will new rental units be incentivized? (I'm in a slightly different situation, but similar concern, from 145 St George St, which is a 12 story building at the maximum height in an Apartment Neighbourhood that has a current application in for rezoning and demolition).



- The final report should identify an action plan and tools needed to achieve the equity, inclusion and access principles outlined.
- I don't think multiplexes will be affordable to all - but they will definitely be on average more attainable than a single family home. I think it's a good first step towards broader housing affordability. For below-market housing, we should be willing to fund that directly from public funds.
- Up-zoning has the potential to increase the cost of land neighbourhood wide while only producing a small number of additional units. The impacts of increasing unaffordability and inaccessibility must be considered and addressed.
- [American Planning Association, Measuring the Early Impact of Eliminating Single-Family Zoning on Minneapolis Property Values](#)
- These integral garages are almost never used for cars. Walking down the street, one sees one or two cars parked in the paved front yard, the "garage" is used for storage, and the front door is a steep flight of steps up from the ground level.
- A key focus point highlighted in the plan is to switch from standard combustion vehicles to Electric Vehicles (EVs). While this is definitely important and a goal towards sustainable transportation infrastructure, first line of consideration should be to providing infrastructure that will allow people to conveniently leave their cars at home, encourage e-bikes to replace second vehicles, provide arterials and commuter routes with protected and connected bike lanes, lower speeds on all roads, and then encourage EVs.
- How does one give input on what is the missing component when the Official Plan has a designation like Apartments when other components are needed?

4.0 Meeting Close

Following the presentation and discussions, the City and Dillon project team provided the participants with the next steps in the process. Participants were also encouraged to reach out to Dillon or the City if there were ideas to share following the meeting.