



## MULTIPLEX STUDY – DRAFT OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT

Proposed Updates for Consultation – February 2023

Note: Policies b) vii and c) i were revised on February 10, 2023 to correct omissions.

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

This text provides a definition for the term “multiplex”.

- a) For the purposes of this Site and Area Specific Policy, a "multiplex" refers to a duplex, triplex, or fourplex.



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*:

- The initial statement clarifies that multiplex development will continue to be low-rise in height, meaning no more than four storeys, as set out in the *Neighbourhoods* policies of the Official Plan.
- The development criteria for multiplexes (listed as a) through e) 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.
- Policy d) emphasizes the importance of providing connected space for trees, to ensure that neighbourhoods continue to grow the tree canopy while adding additional housing for Torontonians.

- b) Development of multiplexes:
  - i. will maintain the low-rise built form 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) maximizing contiguous soft landscaping within front and rear yard setbacks that is supportive of maintaining and expanding the urban tree canopy; and
    - e) respecting and complementing special landscape or built-form features that contribute to the unique physical character of the geographic neighbourhood; and
    - f) conserving heritage attributes of significant built heritage resources.



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;

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.

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

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

- iv. 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;

These policies are intended to encourage more sustainable building practices with the reuse of materials; the avoidance of pouring new carbon-intensive concrete foundations; and the use of solar panels and green roofs.

- v. is encouraged to salvage and/or reuse existing building materials and/or foundations;
- vi. is encouraged to provide green roof areas, solar panels, and low carbon building materials;
- vii. is encouraged to ensure any parking spaces are designed to permit future electric vehicle supply equipment installation;

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

- viii. will minimize privacy impacts between adjacent dwelling units;



This policy is intended to provide guidance that a minor variance from the zoning by-law may be permitted if the project's use of sustainable design features requires it. It recognizes that some sustainable design features may require different development standards to implement. Policy ii) recognizes that basements and other below ground space represent the most carbon-intensive parts of low-rise construction due to their use of concrete and a variance could be required to shift that below ground floor space to above ground space.

- c) Where an application is made under Section 45 of the Planning Act, as amended, in relation to the construction of a multiplex, such application may be granted relief from applicable zoning by-law regulations to accommodate sustainable design features where the development:
  - i) employs sustainable building practices that may result in reductions to gross floor area, such as increased insulation designed to provide a high efficiency building envelope, and/or high efficiency HVAC equipment, and/or fossil fuel-free heating systems; or
  - ii) eliminates livable below-grade floor area in new construction to reduce material carbon emissions associated with new development.

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.

This sidebar clarifies what is meant by "large units" in Policy 1) b) ii. above.

**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.