



## Ready, Set, Midtown: the Yonge-Eglinton Implementation Initiative Midtown Zoning Review – Select Low-Rise Areas: January 2023

# Consultation Summary

*This report is not intended to provide a verbatim transcript of the meeting, but instead provides a high level summary of participant feedback. Many of the comments below were captured during a Virtual Community Consultation Event held on January 25, 2023, but also includes feedback received by email, phone, social media, and other means.*

*If you have any questions after reviewing this summary and the appendix, please contact Matt Armstrong, Senior Planner, Strategic Initiatives, City of Toronto at [readyssetmidtown@toronto.ca](mailto:readyssetmidtown@toronto.ca) or 416-392-3521.*

### Event Overview

On January 25, 2023, the City of Toronto hosted a Virtual Public Consultation Event for the Midtown Zoning Review ("the Review"), for select low-rise areas. The Midtown Zoning Review is a component of "Ready, Set, Midtown", which is a series of three initiatives to implement the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan (the other two being the Midtown Parks and Public Realm Strategy, and the Midtown Infrastructure Implementation Strategy). The meeting was held online through the WebEx Events platform. Consultation materials are available online at the [project website](http://www.toronto.ca/readyssetmidtown): click on "Midtown Zoning Review (<http://www.toronto.ca/readyssetmidtown>)".

The purpose of the consultation was:

- To present proposed zoning by-law changes to select low-rise areas – refer to figure 1 for context maps illustrating locations of the subject lands;
- To seek input from the public on the proposed zoning by-law changes for these areas;
- To ensure engagement and awareness of the study by small land owners, businesses, those not previously involved, and the public at large; and
- To incorporate public feedback on the development of a zoning by-law in advance of its drafting.

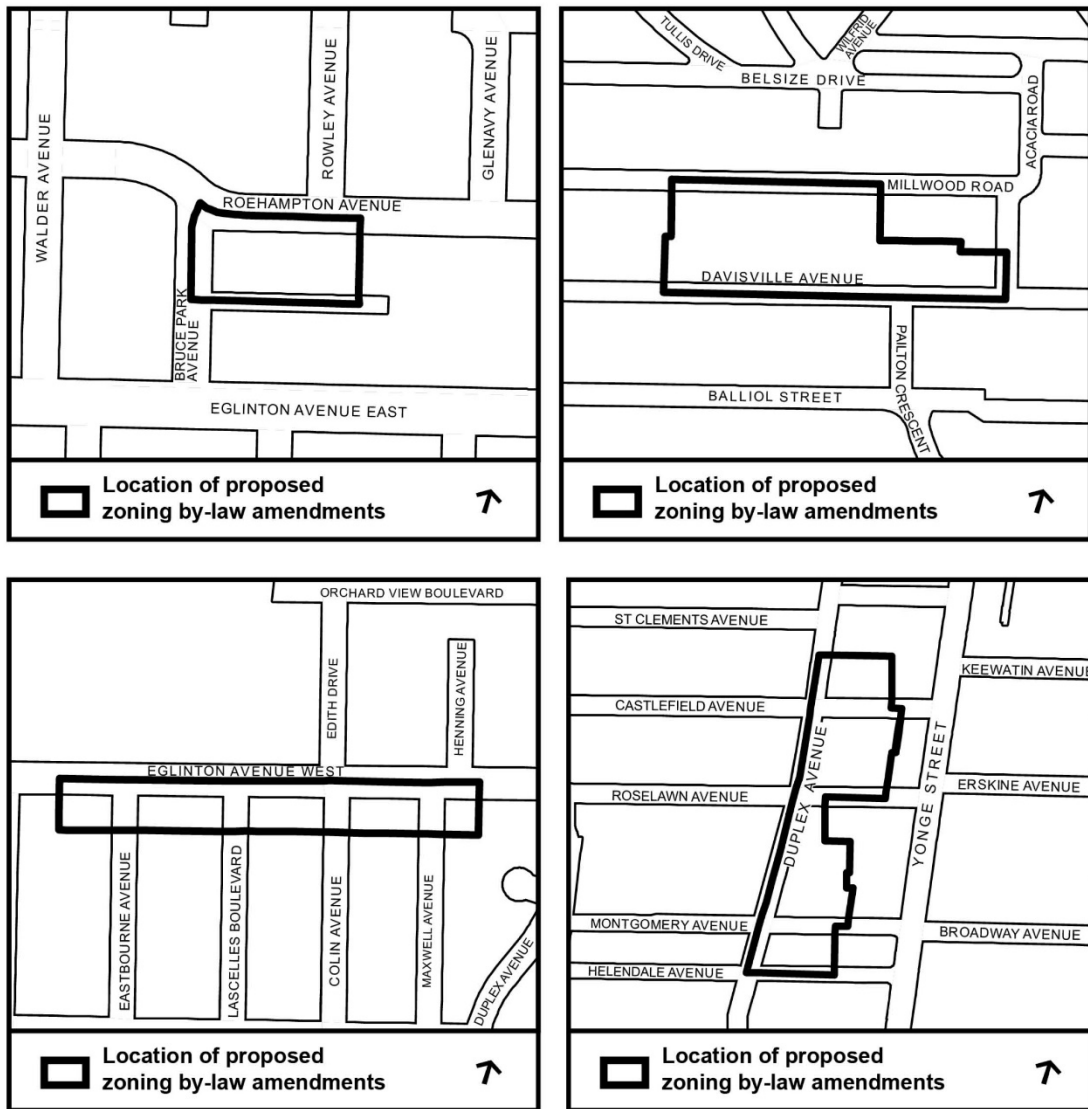


Figure 1: Context maps of locations of proposed zoning by-law changes

The event was held between 6:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. There were approximately 110 people who attended the meeting, excluding City staff, based on the number of individual sign-ins to the meeting from the WebEx record. The meeting consisted of a 35 minute presentation followed by approximately one hour of discussion and feedback. Attendees were able to participate by speaking during the meeting, and by entering questions and comments into the Question & Answer box in the WebEx platform. Additionally, feedback was received by email and phone, both in advance of and after the meeting.

## Consultation Details and Promotion

### Promotion

The meeting was promoted in the following ways:

- Through an email that was sent on January 11, 2023, to over 1,200 subscribers on the Ready, Set, Midtown listserv;
- Through an update to the City of Toronto's dedicated project website, published on January 10, 2023 with the meeting details and registration information;
- Via a detailed letter that included the map in Figure 1, which was mailed to all addresses in the areas proposed to be rezoned, along with property owners in those areas; and
- By briefing the three local Councillors in advance of the meeting.

### Presentation

At the meeting, staff gave a presentation to provide a brief overview of Ready, Set, Midtown, and an explanation of what zoning is and why the zoning review and changes are being proposed. This meeting was specifically focused on presenting proposed zoning by-law changes to select low-rise areas, initiated by the City. In the presentation, staff described the geographic locations of the subject lands, including any exceptions; outlined applicable policy and current zoning permissions; then explained the proposed zoning framework in detail.

The complete presentation is available on the [project website](#): click on "Midtown Zoning Review (<http://www.toronto.ca/readyssetmidtown>)".

## Summary of Feedback

City staff received feedback from attendees during the meeting, and through emails and phone calls prior to and following the meeting. During the question and answer period of the meeting, staff answered as many questions and comments as possible. While not all questions and comments were verbally responded to during the meeting due to time constraints, all have been reviewed and are reflected in this summary. The following is a summary of the feedback received.

### General

Several attendees asked whether there will be access to the presentation after the meeting. All presentation materials have been made available on the [project website](#) (click on "Midtown Zoning Review").

Many of the questions and comments raised during this consultation related to how the proposed zoning changes directly affect specific lands and/or properties. There were also many

questions that related to in-force Secondary Plan policies which are being implemented through the Review. Staff clarified that the purpose and scope of the Review is to implement the in-force Secondary Plan, the policies of which will not be changed at this time.

### **Maximum Building Height Changes**

The presentation included discussion of the proposed zoning change to a maximum height of 4 storeys in the select low-rise areas. In response to questions as to which areas are proposed for this maximum, Staff clarified that low-rise buildings will be set with a height maximum of 4 storeys in the areas described in Figure 1. There was also some clarification requested on current maximum heights in zoning, which staff provided.

There was some concern expressed around a height maximum of 4 storeys being applied to the select low-rise areas. Some attendees felt this was still too high, potentially resulting in disruptions and noise from construction close to where people live and work. Others inquired about having higher maximum heights set for this area. There were questions about why the 4 storey height maximum applies to the select low-rise areas when located close to transit station areas. As noted above, Staff explained that the changes brought forward in this consultation are a result of implementing the Secondary Plan which sets out the maximum height permissions in low-rise areas and outlines where low-rise areas are located. Staff further clarified that an Official Plan Amendment would be required to make changes, for example a change to the maximum height prescribed in policy. Similarly, a question was raised about having taller building height maximums for larger lots. Staff responded that an individual or group could apply to develop a parcel of land, but they would need to demonstrate how they meet applicable policy or apply to change the policy (the latter being an Official Plan Amendment).

### **Parks**

There were a few questions regarding parkland and the rezoning of lands designated as *Parks*. There was one question of whether the Secondary Plan is looking at protecting existing parks from allowing development on them. In response, Staff informed that there is no consideration of development on parks, however the Secondary Plan does outline areas identified as future parks.

There were questions relating to the impacts to houses on properties that are being rezoned to parkland. Some attendees were curious how this also applies to properties if they are sold; i.e., would the houses still be allowed to exist or would they need to be turned into parkland? Staff responded that existing houses would still be permitted on these properties as the proposed zoning by-law amendment would recognize the existing buildings on said properties as "lawfully existing". Similarly, there was a question about the purpose of changing zoning to parkland if

there are lawfully existing homes on the properties. Staff explained that the Secondary Plan designations for these lands considers the long-term future of the area, and that zoning is adding extra level of clarity regarding future intent, while continuing to allow existing homes on these lands.

There was also mention of a specific area on Duplex Avenue between Helendale Avenue and Montgomery Avenue that is to be turned into a park. Concern was raised around how long it will take for this space to be a usable park. Staff requested that the enquiring attendee reach out directly after the meeting, so that they could be connected with staff in Parks, Forestry, and Recreation (PFR).

### **Institutional Uses**

The presentation mentioned institutional uses being permitted in the select low-rise areas. This was followed by questions about what is considered to be institutional buildings. Staff responded that institutional buildings include schools, post-secondary, community facilities, non-profit space, etc.

### **Floor Space Index (FSI)**

There was a question around setting the FSI for the select low-rise areas to a 1.0 minimum and if the minimum could be increased for areas with permitted retail or institutional uses. Staff explained that currently there is no set FSI minimum, however it must be included in zoning to conform with policy direction. Staff indicated that they will look the possibility of setting a higher minimum FSI in areas along Eglinton Avenue West where retail is permitted.

### **Form Based Zoning**

In the presentation, it was mentioned that as part of the Review, there is a proposal to change how the maximum size of a building is regulated - from a maximum FSI to form-based regulations. Although a minimum FSI is required in the zoning for most areas, the maximum building size is proposed to be regulated by height, maximum depth, setbacks, etc. instead of a ratio of the size of the lot to the volume of floor space. Some attendees indicated support of this change.

### **Streetscapes**

There was mention of the transition from buildings to the public realm, specifically where apartment buildings directly abut the sidewalks. An attendee was curious if there was a way to ensure a transition from residential and non-residential uses. Staff explained that this is outlined in the City's Urban Design Guidelines, and is proposed to be included in the zoning for these sites

## **Building Depth**

Attendees generally expressed support for increasing the building depth to 17 metres in the select low-rise areas.

## **Exceptions in Eglinton Park Character Area**

One question raised was regarding the six exceptions in the A1 – Eglinton Park character area mentioned in this project. The six exceptions relate to properties across from Eglinton Park where the current zoning permits a maximum building height of 15 metres. No changes to this maximum are proposed.

## **Built Form**

There was a question about why vehicle entrances will not be permitted on the front of buildings of new developments. This is to reduce curb cuts, consolidate and direct vehicle access, minimize conflict between vehicles and people on the sidewalk, and make a more pedestrian-friendly sidewalk.

## **Public Consultation History**

One attendee asked about the public consultation history of this project. Staff explained that consultation on the Midtown in Focus study dates back to 2012, which then led to the Secondary Plan, which is now being implemented through the Review.

## **Multiplexes**

One attendee inquired about how the proposed changes to zoning are different from the Multiplex Study, or Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON), that the City is also working on. The changes to zoning in Midtown are a result of the in-force Secondary Plan which directs different building types for the Secondary Plan area. Hence, the policy framework is already in place in this area. EHON looks at expanding the building types where the policy basis is still being developed. Furthermore, there was a question about how the City turns properties into multiplexes, and if they expropriate properties to convert them. Staff explained that the changes to allow for multiplexes are intended to permit current or future property owners to build a multiplex or convert an existing building into a multiplex if they choose to; the City will not expropriate the lands to build multiplexes.

## **Other**

A number of other items were raised, including:

- How the proposed zoning changes will affect specific addresses and locations, in which staff provided details on a case by case basis;

- If there will be more phases of the Review in the future; and if specific areas will be addressed. There will be future geographies examined in the Zoning Review process to achieve conformity to the Secondary Plan.
- Whether privately owned public space (POPS) is being looked at as a way of incorporating more greenspace. Staff informed the attendees that although this is not something addressed in zoning, there are other implementation initiatives including the Midtown Public Realm Implementation Strategy, working with PFR through the Midtown Infrastructure Implementation Strategy, and potentially securing POPS and public realm improvements through Community Planning review of applications.

### **What happens to this feedback?**

This feedback is one component of input into the Midtown Zoning Review. Other inputs include planning policy and inputs from the local community, stakeholders, City Divisions and agencies. Toronto City Planning will consider all of this feedback in developing an updated zoning by-law for the area, and will then consult on that draft zoning by-law. A recommended updated zoning by-law will be developed following input received through consultation on the draft.