



TO: EHON ([EHON@toronto.ca](mailto:EHON@toronto.ca))  
Mayor John Tory  
Councillor Mike Colle  
Chris Murray, City Manager  
City Clerk Office  
Gregg Lintern, City Planning  
Councillor Ana Bailao, Chair, Planning and Housing Committee

May 28, 2022

**Re: Comments on the Draft Official Plan Amendments for EHON Multiplexes**

The South Armour Heights Residents' Association ("SAHRA") represents approximately 850 households in the area between Yonge Blvd over to Avenue Road, from the 401 down to Brooke Avenue within Ward 8 (Eglinton-Lawrence).

SAHRA agrees with Councillor Filion's comments (Attachment #1) that "change is both necessary and desirable – we absolutely need to provide more street-level ownership and rental options." But the nature of the changes proposed in this Official Plan Amendment are "blind to the potentially dramatic change and unintended consequences".

We were shocked that in light of the current housing option discussions, recent moves by the Provincial Government but their reluctance to touch Multiplex Zoning before the Elections that the City of Toronto would still propose to move forward with such major Official Plan Amendments.

At the Engagement Sessions in April, 2022 we were advised that the City of Toronto's intention was to have an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) for Multiplexes approved before the draft Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA) was even published. It was our opinion that the OPA and ZBA must be reviewed together. Our question was - what is the rush to approve this before City Council's end of term for the Elections? SAHRA Members have submitted emails to Councillor Colle and City officials that the review/approval of the proposed Official Plan Amendment be DEFERRED until such time that the draft Zoning By-law Amendment has also been published and that the two documents be scheduled for review and approval in 2023. We are very pleased that Planning confirmed on May 26, 2022 that the schedule has now been adjusted. A Proposals Report only will be presented at the July 5, 2022 Planning and Housing Committee; OPA approval will not be requested at that time; rather "both the Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments are expected to be brought forward at the same time in 2023". Thank you!

Our Neighbourhoods are all distinct – one-size-fits all, as-of-right, across the City is not appropriate. Removing all regard of the uniqueness of the Neighbourhoods is going to create characterless/not enjoyable residential areas, with fewer important 'quality of life features'. Our neighbourhood was built Post WWII in which multiplexes were not allowed, or in restricted zones. We need 'area planning' consideration that takes into account neighbourhood characteristics.



The most alarming 'change' is the outright deletion of essential statements in the existing Official Plan – specifically Section 4.1.5 c), d) and e).

Our Post WWII area is currently zoned as RD – single detached. The “prevailing height, massing, scale and density” is two storeys. In our area, lot coverage percentage and maximum number of storeys equal to 2 are the controlling regulations. We do not have gfa or fsi bylaw regulations.

## Key changes to Section 4.1.5

### EXISTING OFFICIAL PLAN

- 5. Development in established *Neighbourhoods* will respect and reinforce the existing 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 heights, massing, scale, density and dwelling type of nearby residential properties;
  - d) prevailing building type(s);
  - e) prevailing location, design and elevations relative to the grade of driveways and garages;
  - f) prevailing setbacks of buildings from the street or streets;
  - g) prevailing patterns of rear and side yard setbacks and landscaped open space;
  - h) continuation of special landscape or built-form features that contribute to the unique physical character of the geographic neighbourhood; and
  - i) conservation of heritage buildings, structures and landscapes.

### PROPOSED OFFICIAL PLAN

- 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.

c) only the words 'dwelling type' need to be removed in this item ... it is very impacting to remove heights, massing, scale and density  
 d) removing this item rezones ALL residential areas to permissive R zone ... no more RD, RT, RS or RM zones – should this be done in all Neighbourhoods?  
 e) driveways and garages are not integral to multiplexes ... no need to remove this item

The EHON materials and discussions suggest a gradual, appropriate addition of multiplex units in an established neighbourhood. If zoning by-law regulations allow certain types of multiplex units in a specific Neighbourhood, why do we need to eliminate any reference to being within the prevailing heights, massing, scale, density, and logistics of garages?

The EHON materials describe multiplex units – two units, three units or four units (note the term 'units') within the zoning regulations for a Neighbourhood. The diagrams show a 17m depth and a 10m height. We interpret this as meaning that in SAHRA's Neighbourhood a duplex is feasible within our 10m height, a triplex only if the first floor was lowered such that it is under 10m, and a fourplex if it was two units side-by-side on two floors within the 10m height. But in other materials, we see/hear the word 'storey'. Anything beyond two storeys in height (10M) would not be 'prevailing' within our Neighbourhood.

Again, why does this 'prevailing' statement need to be eliminated?



If there are no longer Official Plan requirements for respecting the clauses c) and e) then that will apply as well for all non-multiplex applications. Then there is no such thing as working within the by-laws – all variances will get approved by the Committee of Adjustment as there are no 'grounds' for refusing anything.

Today the R-zoned areas, even although they have multiplexes in various forms, are also protected by these clauses of Section 4.5.1 – this will also be eliminated.

We do not have specific statistics on home ownership versus rental for the area, but we feel that the large majority of the homes on the inner residential streets would be owned, rather than rental. Rentals would exist on Avenue (in addition to owned homes) and Wilson (in addition to owned).

On our inner residential streets (bordered by Wilson Avenue, Avenue Road and Yonge Blvd and then Brooke, which is a residential street), we could view it as reasonable to modify the building types allowed to include Semi-Detached and Duplex. As two-storey units, they would match with the prevailing height, massing, scale and density.

We would ask Planning to provide a clear definition of the terms 'Semi-Detached' (RS) versus the multiplex type 'Duplex'. A response from Planning is that they consider them to be one-and-the same as one is side-by-side and the other is above, but we believe that from a Planning perspective they are different (ie interior vs exterior entrances). The City's diagram of Housing Options only contains Semi-Detached – it does not show Duplexes.

Our area could possibly be zoned for RD (single detached) and RS (semi-detached) and possibly Duplexes (depending on their definition) in addition to encouraging Secondary Suites, which are already allowed via existing by-laws in our area. We do not have Laneways in our area but if Garden Suites were allowed, they would also be permitted in our area.

Why would we not proceed with a gradual plan like this rather than forcing triplexes and fourplexes now in our area if they cannot match the prevailing height, massing, scale and density?

Councillor Filion said that "staff have said their intention is to keep the same zoning restrictions as currently exist – e.g. two storeys." He sees that as intentionally naïve. "In a Committee of Adjustment challenge, how do you hold an applicant to two storeys when the Official Plan contemplates up to four and major change is encouraged."

How do you challenge an application for a 3 storey or 4 storey single detached home at Committee of Adjustment when triplexes and fourplexes are permitted.



Specific Comments on the Draft Official Plan Amendment document:

- There are a number of 'should' statements that will have no effect as they do not have to be satisfied: Household Sizes, Accessibility, Green Space, Tree Canopy, Environmental Practices, Reusing Materials, Sidebar Large Units.
- We have also seen reference to a new term 'Building Envelope' or "Permitted Envelope' in the EHON presentation materials. We do not know what this is but if EHON Multiplex is intending on using a new concept to today's regulations (ie fsi) this must be declared and discussed.
- A declaration of intentions regarding 'future modifications' and/or 'four-storey' or 'low-rise apartments' is required now...not as a surprise add-on later.
- The draft OPA states "Where there is a conflict between this Site and Area Specific Policy xxx and either a Secondary Planb or another Site and Area Specific Policy in Chapter 7, this Site and Area Specific Policy will prevail". Secondary Plans provide more detailed land use policy direction than the Official Plan to fit the local context. It would therefore be a complete reversal of the planning regime adopted in Ontario to have this proposed SASP prevail over any Secondary Plan.
- City Planning should publish their projections by Neighbourhood as to the number of incremental dwelling units they anticipate per year through the EHON Multiplex initiative. The Public is being led to believe that this initiative will solve the housing availability and affordability crisis – they need to know the actual projections.

We have tried to make SAHRA's Members aware of the various EHON initiatives – Laneway Suites, Garden Suites and Multiplexes but very few understand the programs and unintended consequences. It is the responsibility of the City to advise/educate all property owners of intentions to redesignate and rezone their property – the City must reach all 550,000 property owners, not just the small portion that have chosen to follow EHON initiatives. This must be done before approval, not just a newspaper ad written in legalese or after the proposals have been approved.

As you can see, SAHRA has many questions and concerns about this OPA, the not yet published ZBA and the new concept of 'Building Envelope' or 'Permitted Envelope.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sheila Dunlop'.

Sheila Dunlop (Secretary)

Councillor John Filion

All Councillors

Jim Sadler, Bob Williams, Gary Langdon (SAHRA)

FoNTRA, FoSTRA, CORRA

Lytton Park Residents' Organization

Bedford Park Residents Organization

Upper Avenue Community Association

1500 Avenue Road, PO Box 1373, Toronto, Ontario M5M 0A1



## Attachment #1



May 13, 2022

### My Back Pages

It's uncomfortable to find oneself on both sides of the same issue, in this case refereeing a struggle between my younger and older selves to find some wisdom that likely lies in between.

This month, City Planning staff released a draft policy encouraging multiplex (duplex, triplex and fourplex) housing throughout every neighbourhood. The issue under discussion is how far the City should go to open up neighbourhoods to new types of housing.

My younger self would say, "Not at all. Draw a solid line between main street intensification and neighbourhood status quo." That was, in fact, what the City promised residents when it introduced the new Official Plan some 20 years ago.

My current thinking is that change is both necessary and desirable – we absolutely need to provide more street-level ownership and rental options. But I believe this should be driven by pragmatism rather than ideology. A good example might be the way I have already introduced this in part of the new Yonge North Secondary Plan, creating a designated area allowing multiple units within housing that looks similar to what's now on the street.

My struggle arises from a belief that City Planning is moving ahead with a downtown-centric view that is blind to the potentially dramatic change and unintended consequences in places like Willowdale. We want to create more affordable housing options rather than trigger more land speculation which does the opposite. Nor should we lose control over the size of what somebody can build next to you – on every street in Willowdale.

Change has been brewing for several years, starting as a push mostly from downtown housing advocates to get rid of "yellow belt" restrictions, the colour on the zoning map for the neighbourhoods that make up most of North York, Scarborough and Etobicoke. But what began as a divide between Toronto's downtown and its former suburbs is increasingly less about geography than differences in age and income, reflecting a housing affordability crisis that makes



it difficult for most young people to buy or even rent in Toronto.

Willowdale is composed mainly of neighbourhoods in which new construction is limited to two-storey homes (with a second unit, typically in the basement). Earlier this year, Council added backyard "Garden Suites," allowing a third unit as a separate building. Anything more than that is mostly limited to main streets.

As a member of the Planning Committee, I was involved in requiring new housing to reflect the "prevailing" character of the surrounding neighbourhood. Only last week did I learn that staff have proposed turning that upside down, nullifying wording that preserves the existing character by adding the option to reflect the "planned" multiplex character. On every local street.

Before the City embarked on the current multiplex policy review, I sought – and received – assurances from the Chief Planner that the intention was not to make big changes *everywhere* in neighbourhoods. That assurance doesn't reflect what's now being proposed. Earlier this year I got a commitment from the planner in charge of the file to tour Willowdale with me, to talk about unintended consequences. That never happened.

Staff have said their intention is to keep the same zoning restrictions as currently exist – e.g. two storeys. I see that as intentionally naïve. In a Committee of Adjustment challenge, how do you hold an applicant to two storeys when the Official Plan contemplates up to four and major change is encouraged?

For that matter, how would you stop someone from completely subverting the intent of the change by trying to build a single four-storey home, arguing that the impact on the neighbours was less than if it had four units?

So where does that leave us?

This policy has the potential to bring about a level of change in Willowdale equivalent to highrise development near Yonge or the replacement of small post-war bungalows with much larger homes. I see both of those as part of a natural evolution of the area but also ones that needed to be carefully regulated. This change is much the same.

My main purpose in writing about this today is to make you aware of it, so that you can do your own research, form your own opinion, and weigh in on the debate. You can comment by clicking [here](#).

There are valid points of view on all sides of this. Perhaps you can help me reconcile mine.

-John