

Attachment G4 – Summary of Open Houses and Industry Workshop Feedback

The following are notes from staff, based on feedback received through discussions at the three Open Houses and the Development Industry Workshop.

Open House at Kitchener Market – January 20, 2024

- Overall positive feedback, supportive of allowing more units on each property.
- Concern about tree loss and associated urban heat impacts with canopy loss.
- Concern about the increased impervious surface on residential properties and implications for stormwater management (infiltration) and climate change factors – increased frequency and intensity of storms and urban heat islands (retention of heat in paved surfaces). Suggestion for a maximum impervious ratio on properties and requirement that driveways and/or walkways be made of pervious materials (e.g., pervious pavers).
- Side/rear setbacks avoid impacts on adjacent properties, such as stairs in the side yard and limited space to get to the rear yard on a property (e.g., residents or maintenance requiring access to neighboring properties).
- Request that we consider allowing direct access to a trail (e.g., Iron Horse or Spur Line trail) as the primary access (1.1m sidewalk) rather than requiring it to a front yard.
- Questions about the degree of impact that this project would have on new housing being created.
- Concerns that units would become short-term rentals.
- Concerns about the overall affordability of housing.
- Concerns about traffic and parking in the neighbourhood streets because some properties do not have enough driveway capacity to accommodate 3-4 cars.
- Concerns about reducing parking requirements for neighborhoods that do not have easy access to transit. One resident said it takes them 20-30 minutes to walk to the nearest bus station.

Open House at Stanley Park – January 23, 2024

- Allowance for lower ceiling heights in the basement (staff indicated that this is a building code matter).
- Feedback about allowing detached ADUs at the regulatory exterior side setback rather than in alignment with the house on a corner lot.
- Questions about electrical capacity in neighbourhoods (indicated that Enova is circulated through the process).
- Concern about parking – where vehicles would be stored (over-use of on-street parking) or illegal widening/parking on the lawn.
- Questions about the rules in a dual zone lot (NHC and RES)
- Questions around group homes and whether more than one unit can be used for the group home with the same operator.
- Property owner perspective concerns about privacy and overlook – placement of units, overlook into the rear yard (sides of long additions).
- Concerns about servicing capacity – sanitary, SWM – area is very flat (e.g., some places may not work).
- Opposition to growing at all – questioning why we need to grow.
- From a developer perspective, allow for narrower lots - triplex rules are too restrictive and can be functional on smaller lots. Consider flexible street frontage if all the other requirements can be met.
- Avoid variance from a process perspective.
- Side yard setback for a parking lot should be 0.6m
- From a developer perspective, 4 doors at the front should be permitted as it can be challenging from a floor plan perspective. Stairs may project in the front yard.
- Interest in shared driveways between two properties to have a narrower driveway.
- Concern about neighbourhood character – moved to the neighbourhood for the density, and it is proposed to change (parking, number of people).

Open House at Forest Heights – January 31, 2024

- General supporting feedback
- Suggestion to allow the Additional Dwelling Unit detached in the exterior yard, including the front yard.
- Suggestion to allow a prefabricated tiny home for faster approval process.
- Concern about the overall impact on greenspace and parking around the city.
- Concern with shadow impacts for the additional dwelling units detached.
- Supporting the geographical approach to parking requirement.
- Concern about property values if neighbouring properties build four units.
- Concern about impacts to on-street parking and that visitors to their home would not have access to on-street parking.

Development Industry Workshop at Forest Heights – January 31, 2024

This workshop was attended by 20 participants in the development industry. The format included table discussions with each group discussing each theme. The following are staff notes from the workshop.

Theme 1: Lot Width and Lot Area

- Parking will drive lot width
- Access to laneway lot width is not relevant
- Rely on coverage
- Consideration for character of neighbourhoods
- Allow higher heights rather than size requirements.
 - 12.1 m
 - Leave “as is”
 - 12-13 m height
 - Prefab
 - Flat roof
- More rear lanes in new subdivisions to allow for narrow lots
- Builders see several additions or conversions for family arrangements.
- Keep the main lot area and reduce width.
- 13.1 m width comfortable for tiny homes
- 1.1 m walkway
- Reduce frontage to reduce side setback
- Need to shrink house
- Acquiring land -> more lots enabled
- See need for 2.5 m side yard setback
- Conversions need more space
- 40 ft will still need a variance

Theme 2: Parking

- Parking requirements should be different in different locations of the city

- Bicycle parking can also be based on location
- Parking is a market-driven component
- Cars can be parked in the front as the legal parking space and tandem parking can be considered
- Car share idea to reduce the number of cars
- Propose creative parking lot design to reduce hard surface
- Remove all the parking requirements and keep it to the market demand
- Parking can be on a rate of 0.5 per dwelling. This will balance the demand.
- Create accessible units, especially the ground floor unit, to be barrier-free and have accessible parking space.
- Class A bicycle parking was not supported.
- Do not formalize the bicycle parking requirement.
- Parking rate should be reduced from the current By-law requirement.
- Permit system for street parking
- Shared parking/ shared car
- To make those units affordable, parking rate should be reduced.

Theme 3: Backyard Homes

- Existing garage to ADU
- Common space (amenity) – suggest 7 ft x width of house
- Flexibility
- 2 storey – egress - 7.2 m v 23 ft
- 2 units make sense technically.
- Cost of foundation
- Increase maximum footprint.
- Staircases take up space
- 80 m sq not enough
- Access is a problem
- How does it fit with urban design
- 2 storeys is viable
- Maintain it as subordinate, don't destroy the intent of additional units
- Trees
 - Use existing streets
 - Protect trees
- Corner lots good for ADUs
- ADU above garage -> demand
- Separation distance between primary and ADU -> OBC?
- 4' setback – closer?
- More height is beneficial
- RIENS rules limiting height based on the height of the principal dwelling is a constraint
- Lot width -> pie shaped lots
- 6 m setback for parking
- School board DCs

- Development Charge for 4th unit – \$40,000 CAD
- Storm water, infiltration galleries
- Green space
- Funding to take down old buildings
- Privacy, activity, shadow [vegetable garden]
 - One storey is fine [preferable]
 - Not in favor of 2 storeys
- Not maximizing the property
- Cap at 20ft flat roof
- Below grade
- Permitting 3 units in ADU – going beyond
- Impossible with townhouse
- Less concerned with number of units
- Laneway housing -> 2 storeys is okay
- Exterior side yard -> okay!

Theme 4: Building Design

Number of doors on front façade:

- Current rules noted as not being flexible. Don't limit number of doors but perhaps limit the way the doors are facing.
- Concern of tear downs and rebuild. Make it easier to retrofit existing buildings.
- Cross comment of rebuilds being designed to fit the community and offer more flexibility in design.
- Can you save the original house and focus on ADU at 3 units?
- Can the City push to develop properties that have existing laneways in the rear?
- Allow multiple doors. Doors and entrances must be fire rated and effects egress (Building Code issues).
- Common corridor in a building is wasted space.
- More flexibility of door layout.
- Natural layout of a building usually results on doors along the sides or rear of a building.
- No opinion on doors. Supported one door.
- One door is restrictive.
- Can you have one door but a projecting vestibule with access to other units?
- One door can result in unfunctional front door.

Access and building projection:

- Many existing homes don't have existing weeping tiles.
- Slab on grade is preferred instead of pushing people into the basement resulting in more vertical projection.
- Try to preserve original house and focus on new build.
- Difficulties with mechanical units projecting into access area while maintaining proper access widths.
- Mandate a clear egress width.

- Door along the side of the house beside mechanical works.
- Grading and external stairs.
- Mobility concerns.
- More allowance for new mechanical works.
- Cluster mechanical to one side of the building with access on the other all while considering setbacks.
- Door swing should be prioritized where doors are located not for the whole walkway.
- Can mechanical works be elevated?
- Allowance in zoning to allow for pop outs.

Trees:

- Trees vs. Parking. Provide opportunities to plant more trees.
- Private trees should be allowed to be removed.
- Shared trees and needing to preserve the canopy may limit uptake.
- More options for tree replacements.
- No arborists should be needed. Adds to cost.
- Can trees be replaced?
- Private trees should be dealt with privately.
- Private landscaping is encouraged and incentivized.
- Make the expectations clear.
- Permits slow the process down.
- Bad thing to take down large-diameter trees. Toronto requires permit for private trees over 0.3m diameter to be removed.

Servicing:

- Concern for SWM and increased impervious areas. Triggered through the Building Permit process.
- Green roofs could be a SWM solution.
- Checklist for owners: Have you thought about these things?
- Where are downspouts going?
- Make it clear when servicing upgrades are required.
- Potentially oversize services during upsizes.
- For properties that don't have lot certification the developer should be notified prior to issuing an ADU building permit.

Other:

- Maximum height of buildings should be increased.
- Height restrictions result in accessibility issues. Easiest way is slab on grade.
- Get the real estate community involved.
- Can you get a cross-section of the development community to do test project.
- Set up an online tool to do mock up site layouts of each property.
- Less trips to CofA
- Time is important.
- Make it very clear what the requirements are.

- Monitor where the City is seeing increased re-development clusters.
- More public awareness.
- To increase uptake, reduce red tape... Parking!!
- Get rid of the requirement to eliminate Committee of Adjustment for existing building layouts that don't meet bylaw.
- This will be successful if it is creative.

General feedback about how the City can support uptake:

- Get real estate industry involved
- Pilot program
- Online tool -> automate
- Simple library for ADUs
- Direct link to zoning requirements by property
- Flexibility so that it doesn't go to Committee of Adjustment
- Approval process is time consuming and expensive
- Clearer regulations
- Where severances are happening? Where is density going? (analyze planning trends)
- Public awareness / questions on what going
- Eliminate the need for minor variance for addition to existing building setbacks
- Templates
 - Good to have
 - May not always work
 - Need to consider site constraints