

List of Key Suggestions

The Mid-rise Symposium was an important step towards the implementation of Toronto Official Plan goals and objectives. Symposium participants made a number of suggestions, and staff have tracked and categorized the key suggestions below:

Municipal Policy and Research Initiatives

- Ensure Public Sector leadership: all publicly funded buildings within the designation should build to minimum densities, such as libraries, schools, daycares, TTC stations, community centres, Toronto Parking Authority, post offices, daycares, police stations etc.
- Speed up Avenue Studies; and revise the Terms of Reference to make studies less streetscape-oriented and with more emphasis on pre-zoning.
- Construction costs are the same all across the city therefore revenues and profits depend heavily on location; Avenue Studies should address this.
- Don't permit high-rise buildings at locations where the City wants to encourage mid-rise. Send clear Official Plan and zoning message; finish tall building studies.
- Create polices to preserve larger sites.
- Identify existing city-owned surplus lands for mid-rise redevelopment opportunities - lead by example.
- Examine partnership and polices to create affordable housing in conjunction with other Public initiatives along the Avenues.
- Review options for Tax Increment Financing on the Avenues, as well as other tax category changes.
- Examine the use of Community Improvement policies.
- Limit severances on properties with wide frontages on designated Avenues.
- Consider auto-share, off-site parking (commercial lots), parking stackers and elevators as potential solutions to satisfying parking requirements.
- Publish the 'Precedents' Research.
- Look at successful international examples of mid-rise intensification in places such as Chicago or London.
- Establish Industry Reference Group involving representatives from development industry, architects, academics, City Staff, BIAs etc.; to generate workshops or presentations to staff, to other municipalities; industry associations etc.

Municipal Implementation Tool Kit

- Provide a comprehensive incentives kit along with a further look at taxation policies; building code requirements; development charges; use of Community Improvement policies; small site parking; and loading exemptions etc. as these pertain to Avenues mid-rise development.
- Establish development permit system (DPS) along the Avenues.
- Study small site parking and loading exemptions.
- For smaller developments waive Section 37 requirements; Parkland dedication requirements or payment in lieu; parking requirements; limit or eliminate Development charges for mid-rise buildings.
- 'Avenues' zoning parameters should permit: flexible floor to ceilings (more height); No 'shrink wrap' zoning envelopes; minimum as-of-right zoning of 2.5X with simple setbacks.
- Pre-zone areas on periphery Avenues where retail is not so successful that it precludes redevelopment.
- Provide for Mid-rise "as of right" type base zoning, as was provided for in the former City of Toronto's MCR zoning provisions.
- Minimum lot depths for Mid Rise Buildings should be 120 feet.
- Generally loosen zoning requirements.
- Put less detail into Zoning By-laws and make better use of the flexibility afforded by design guidelines.
- Reduce Parking Requirements.
- Permit parking at ground floor of buildings screened by retail or residential units at-grade from

street on larger sites.

Municipal Processing Incentives

- Initiate a special process to direct development and investment along Avenues that could involve a triage of City Departments or "swat team" with pro-active support from the City Manager, Deputies, Mayor and Council.
- Revise the Site Plan Process to delegate approval to staff (no bump up to Council) and permit Planning Staff to 'weigh the benefits' of Works and Emergency Services requirements on these sites.
- Establish an internal Staff Steering Group examine changes to approvals process.
- Ensure all City Departments work together towards a shared vision for mid-rise development and parking and loading standards.
- Provide for certainty and a consistent commitment to work together to resolve issues and remove risk from approvals process.

Retail and Live-Work Strategies

- Exempt ground floor retail from GFA; development charges; parking requirements; and property tax.
- Reduce the difference between ground floor retail taxes in a new building and existing 2-3 storey strip retail buildings.
- Provide transition incentives to retain existing retailers being dislocated by the redevelopment of particular sites.
- Accommodate for the conversion of ground floor space by providing flexible zoning to permit ground floor changes of use.
- Secure Ground Floor Retail leases in advance of final building design to ensure utility.
- Review Residential Condominium Agreements, which preclude a wide range of retail uses.
- Review loading, storage and garbage space requirements as these relate to retail.
- Allow for Retail Signage.
- Further assistance could be given to small businesses in connecting potential retail uses with developers on the Avenues, as well as helping developers with marketing strategies to appeal to younger/older buyers within the established neighbourhoods.
- Recognize Live/Work as retail, and review strict building code restrictions which make it difficult to achieve; (Ontario Building Code requirement limits live/work areas to 150 square metres).
- Create a 'live work' tax category.

Community Consultation Enhancements

- Re-examine the community consultation process. Need for community support is fundamental to making mid-rise development work.
- Create a community culture of co-operation rather than confrontation by holding open houses; deal with issues on a one-on-one basis; work with communities to provide benefits.
- Public meetings during the planning stages should also be part of marketing the finished product. (Engage the very community, people from which may want to live or run their business in the new building).
- Focus redevelopment efforts on receptive communities and build on success.
- Promote existing and surrounding amenities in the neighbourhoods as a way to advertise mid-rise development.
- Communities need to understand how intensification will affect them; they may need new amenities to enhance their streets and communities, yet these things (such as good shopping, active public realm, and coffee shops) do not come if intensification does not occur.

Site-planning and Sustainability Improvements

- Mandate 'Green Roof' requirements.
- Require more amenity spaces.
- Provide clear streetscape requirements so that developers can incorporate cost estimates into project costs.
- Place all development along the Avenues under Site Plan Control.
- Ensure a diversity of buildings (in terms of cost, unit sizes, style, etc.).
- Assist applicants to co-ordinate right-of-way issues such as access, hydro, TTC stops, and sidewalk reconstruction.
- Examine the implications for cost sharing some of the public realm improvements on smaller projects.
- Make garbage and loading requirements less onerous.
- Prohibit new curb cuts along Avenues.
- Encourage the participation of local businesses to help change the streetscape of the Avenues.
- Create "Avenues Incentive Corridors" or "Avenues First" policies or "Avenues Enterprise zones" through Community Improvement Plan and the use of tax increment financing.
- Facilitate an OBC Review for mid-rise building category (Limited Combustible); to be addressed by the Ministry of Housing and the Building Code Commission.

Prepare Communication and Promotions Strategies

- Educate & Market the Avenues as a positive lifestyle option -link the Policy Vision to personal daily life.
- Communicate the positive examples of mid-rise buildings along our Avenues to the public, politicians, stakeholders and share lessons learned.
- Address the gaps between expectations and reality, by better explaining the options Avenues offer as a life style choice - use the "see, feel, touch" approach.
- Consistently reinforce the message that intensification shouldn't be feared and that the best way to get good street life, animation, retail and servicing variety and other amenities is through intensification.
- Help with a "perceptual shift" - engage the development industry, land-owners in a discussion that focuses around dispelling the notion that intensification means high-rise and hold-outs for "unrealistic" land values expectations along Avenues.
- Establish a new award through AUDA - "Building in context" for Mid-Rise Buildings.
- Send out occasional media releases announcing mid-rise building activity or some other "good news" stories.
- Maintain ongoing Web presence.

Other 'Big Picture' Suggestions

- Expand the mass transit system (subways).
- Can the City secure mortgages? Banks are part of the problem - especially around assisting with affordable housing units.
- Can City help with Partnerships such as Seniors Housing providers?
- Lead by example - City needs to set the stage and invest in public realm improvements.
- Public and private partnerships advised for corners of major intersections.
- Toronto's Mayor should abolish wards to the unify city.
- Subways and streetcars make vibrations and noise along the streets; Need to make subways and streetcars are less noisy and smoother along the Avenues to overcome this issue.
- Understand the collective and cumulative impacts of charges before proposing incentives.
- Re-order existing budget priorities.