Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study

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with
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Quadrangle Architects Limited
Urban Marketing Collaborative

May 2010

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The City of Toronto is forecast to have approximately 3.08 million residents by 2031 – representing a growth in population of approximately 500,000 over the next 20 years. Strategies for how and where to accommodate this growth are of increasing importance. The City's Official Plan encourages a significant portion of this growth to be directed towards intensification areas, one of which is the Avenues. An important component of this study has been to understand the role that mid-rise buildings on the Avenues can play in accommodating Toronto's growth. Understanding the potential of mid-rise redevelopment also provides an important perspective as the City assesses the appropriate extent to which low-rise and tall building development may also accommodate this growth.

The Avenues amount to approximately 324 kilometres of property frontage. About 200 kilometres of this frontage can theoretically be redeveloped through mid-rise built form. If half of these properties were developed over the next twenty years through mid-rise built form, the Avenues could accommodate a new population of approximately 250,000 residents. Mid-rise redevelopment of the Avenues therefore has the ability to address a significant portion of the City's anticipated growth needs over the next twenty years.

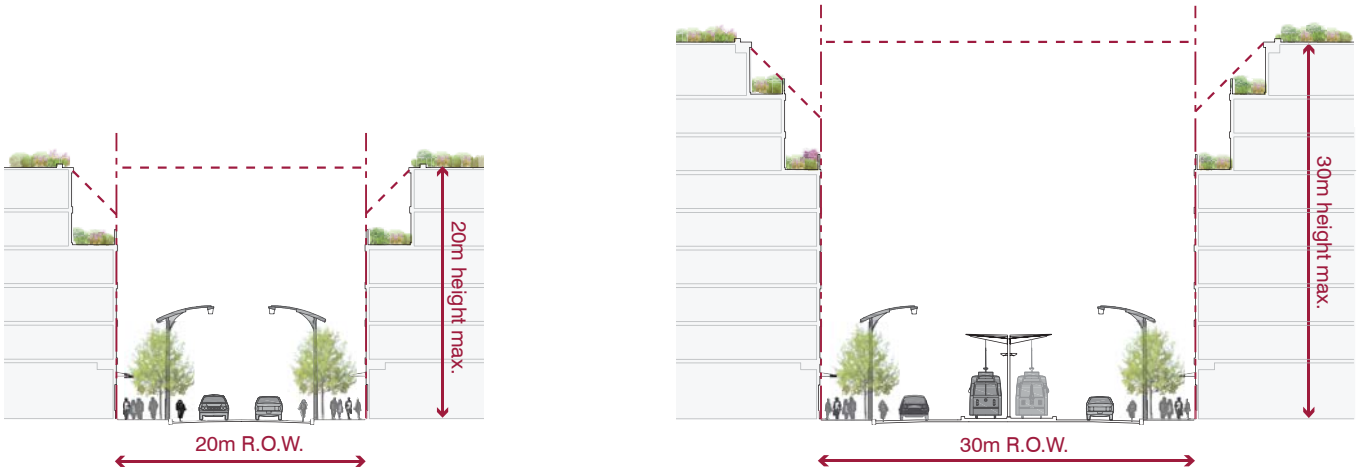
The Avenues policies in the Official Plan are intended to help the City direct growth to key main streets, and areas with existing infrastructure, including transit, retail, and community services, while protecting the character and stability of existing adjacent neighbourhoods. The character of growth that will occur through mid-rise built form will recognize the unique connection to these neighbourhoods through a development form that is moderate in scale and reflects high quality design and materials.

Mid-Rise Building on the Avenues

Mid-rise buildings are no taller than the width of the street right-of-way or between 5 and 11 storeys. The as-of-right height of a mid-rise building will be determined by a series of factors. The maximum height is established based on a 1:1 ratio where the maximum height of a building is equivalent to the width of the right-of-way. The ability to realize the maximum height is tempered by angular planes applied to the front of the site and the rear of the site respectively. Not all sites on the Avenues will be able to achieve the maximum height, as some properties are physically constrained. See Section 2.2 for further detail.

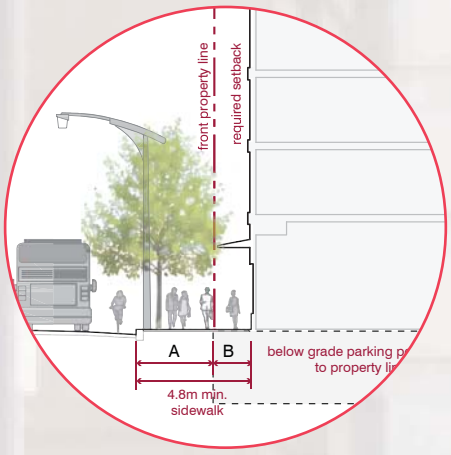
Where the Recommendations of the Study Apply

The segments of the Avenues that are designated in the Official Plan as Mixed-Use Areas, Employment Areas, Institutional Areas and Regeneration Areas are the locations where Avenues are to be reurbanized and targeted for growth. The recommended mid-rise Performance Standards of this study apply to these areas with the following exceptions: portions of Avenues where an Avenue Study is completed or underway, portions of an Avenue within a Secondary Plan Area, and portions of an Avenue that have been subject to other City-led studies that have resulted in an Official Plan Amendment and/or new Zoning By-laws. While other land use designations on the Avenues, including Neighbourhoods, Apartment Neighbourhoods, Parks and Open Space Areas, and Natural Areas are not intended for intensification, they should follow the public realm and streetscape improvement Performance Standards of this study. See Section 2.1 for further detail.



Maximum allowable height is determined by the width of the public right-of-way (all references to the R.O.W. or R.O.W. widths, denote the public R.O.W.). According to Official Plan Map 3 - Right-of-Way Widths Associated with Existing Major Streets, there are four widths - 20, 27, 30 and 36 metres that prevail on the Avenues.

Map of areas with the land use designations where the Performance Standards should apply (Mixed Use Areas, Employment Areas, Regeneration Areas and Institutional Areas).



Objectives of the Study

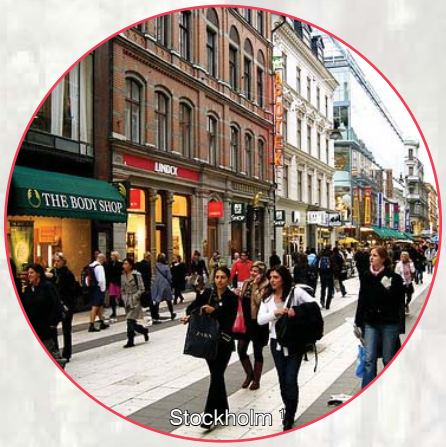
The objective of the Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study is to recommend policies and processes that can be adopted by the City to catalyze the reurbanization of the Avenues through the development of well-designed mid-rise buildings.

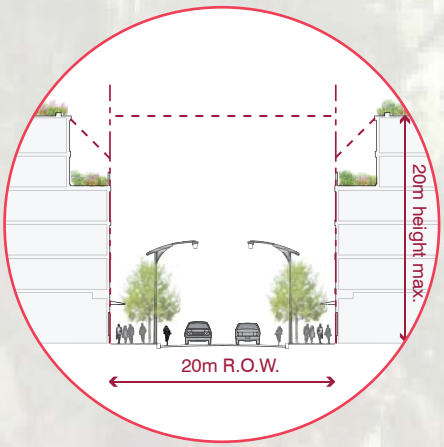
The objective of this study is to develop recommendations for urban design, policy and process that will encourage the development of more and better designed mid-rise buildings on the Avenues, where growth is expected and encouraged.

Over the last decade, the City has been compiling information on the barriers to mid-rise development through: the Mid-Rise Symposium; Avenue Studies; consultation with the development community; consultation with the public; and through feedback from City staff. These processes have resulted in a number of ideas for encouraging well-designed mid-rise development along the Avenues. This study will focus on the following recommendations:

- **Update zoning that reflects the Official Plan, and urban design guidelines.** As-of-right zoning for mid-rise buildings on the Avenues is generally seen as a positive advancement towards removing barriers to mid-rise development. The development community has acknowledged that new zoning will provide an incentive to develop mid-rise buildings on the Avenues. Recommendations that will assist in preparing the zoning are included in Section 3: Performance Standards.
- **Providing an expedited approvals process:** A dedicated Mid-Rise Interdivisional Team that is familiar with the past constraints to mid-rise development should be formalized to expedite the approvals process for mid-rise buildings on the Avenues (see Section 4: Recommendations).
- **Developing Compliance Alternatives for constrained sites:** A series of acceptable Compliance Alternatives for servicing, loading, parking, amenity space, etc. should be adopted by the City, allowing more constrained sites to be developed (see Section 4: Recommendations)

Overall, one of the most important factors that will catalyze the Avenues vision is “certainty” in the development process, which can be achieved through an adoption of mid-rise zoning. Achieving this certainty will be beneficial to the general public and surrounding communities as well, providing them with a cohesive and consistent vision for the Avenues.





Building on the Official Plan

This Study is built on, and will help implement, policies and directions from the City's Official Plan, by:

a) identifying the characteristics of appropriate growth, referred to here as 'mid-rise urbanism', that will revitalize the Avenues while protecting adjacent neighbourhoods;

b) referencing previous City initiatives that influence mid-rise recommendations, including: Main Streets Initiative, Mid-Rise Symposium, completed Avenue Studies, Heritage Conservation Districts, Transit City, Tall Buildings - Inviting Change in Downtown Toronto, Toronto Green Standard, Green Roof By-law, and the Vibrant Streets Manual;

c) engaging the public through open house events and focus groups, including discussions with development industry representatives, community stakeholders, and City Staff, including the Mid-Rise Interdivisional Team, Planning Reference Group, and Mid-Rise Core Team;

d) recommending a series of mid-rise building Performance Standards to be implemented through various tools (i.e. Zoning By-law, urban design guidelines);

e) examining a series of mid-rise building precedents that have been built in Toronto and international cities;

f) identifying the optimal site and dimensional characteristics for efficient mid-rise development that informs a series of prototypes that are tailored to each of the prevailing right-of-way widths;

g) assessing the development potential of sites with site specific constraints in a variety of contexts;

h) recommending amendments to the policy and regulatory framework (i.e. Official Plan, Zoning By-laws, and urban design guidelines) to create a better climate for the development of mid-rise buildings on the Avenues, while providing the broader community with a level of comfort about the character of development;

i) recommending modifications to City processes and procedures related to development application review, agreements and approvals processes;

j) categorizing those segments of the Avenues where the City encourages growth, and identifying special circumstances that will inform how the Avenues are reurbanized, including Character Areas and retail at-grade requirements; and,

k) identifying potential compliance alternatives related to technical requirements.

Key Recommendations

Below is a summary of the key recommendations from this study. The recommendations are a result of information gathering and analysis, consultation with the public, development community and City Staff, and a review of existing conditions on the Avenues.

Performance Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings

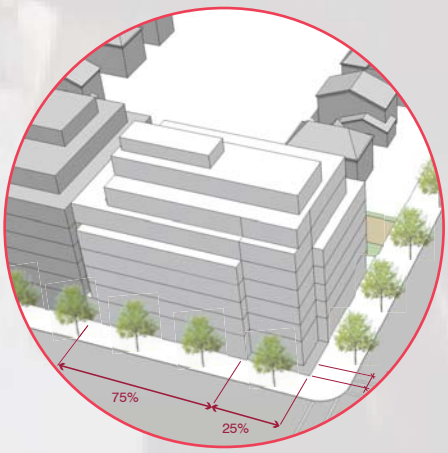
To realize the vision for the Avenues, updated zoning is required. As-of-right zoning will remove bottlenecks which presently discourage mid-rise redevelopment of the Avenues, and will provide certainty to both the public and development community.

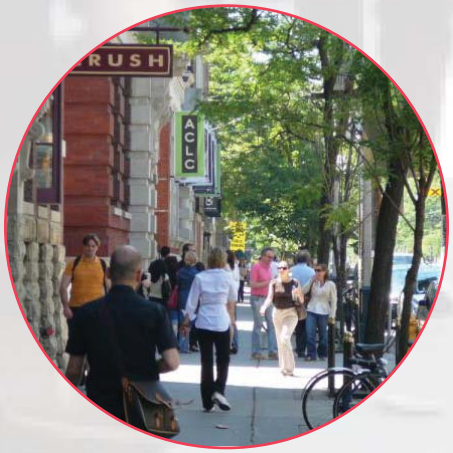
- The City should implement the recommendations contained in Section 3: Performance Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings through new zoning and urban design guidelines for the Avenues. (See Section 4.2.1)
- The Character Area Study should provide additional preliminary guidance, through the Character Area descriptions in Appendix A and the Character Area Performance Standards 19A - G, for architectural and urban design for areas identified as Character Areas. Applications for buildings within Character Areas should include a Character Area Response Statement. (See Section 4.2.2)

Official Plan

The City's Official Plan review will commence in 2011. This study has examined at the Avenues on a city-wide basis and through site visits, analysis, test sites, etc., and have developed several recommendations regarding the Avenues that should be taken into consideration during the Official Plan review.

- The City should broaden the Avenues to incorporate more of the arterial road network, including all Transit City corridors. (See Section 4.3.1)
- Presently segments of the Avenues with a land use designation of Apartment Neighbourhoods are not included in the Avenues mid-rise intensification policies. The City should consider including Apartment Neighbourhoods as part of the growth management framework for Avenues. (See Section 4.3.1)
- The City should consider redesignating some segments along Avenues that currently have a Neighbourhoods land use designation, particularly those that have, or are planned to have, high-order transit. (See Section 4.3.1)





City Administration & Processes

Implementation of updated Avenues zoning and urban design guidelines requires a concerted effort from City Staff, in all Divisions and ABCDs, to adopt a holistic city-wide system for public education, development application review and approval for mid-rise buildings. Such a system should reduce the approvals time for applicants, which has been identified as a major barrier to mid-rise development.

- The City should permanently appoint a Mid-Rise Interdivisional Team that will review mid-rise building applications on the Avenues. This team should be familiar with the recommendations of this study with the purpose of expediting the approvals process for mid-rise buildings. (See Section 4.4.1)
- The City's Design Review Panel should review select applications for mid-rise buildings on the Avenues, with the objective of elevating the quality of design. (See Section 4.4.2)
- The City should utilize Official Plan Amendment 66 to secure high-quality building materials and streetscapes. Submissions for the Site Plan Approvals process should include 1:50 scale detailed building elevations to facilitate discussions with the City focused on design quality. (See Section 4.4.3)

Other Recommendations

- The City should utilize the Compliance Alternatives developed as part of this study (currently under review) when reviewing applications on constrained sites or on sites that have difficulty in meeting certain technical requirements, but that otherwise meet the intent of the Performance Standards included in this study. (See Section 4.5.1)
- The City should consider alternative parking requirements for mid-rise buildings on Avenues that have a high-level of transit service or that apply acceptable Compliance Alternatives for providing vehicular and bicycle parking. (See Section 4.5.2 & 4.5.3)
- The City should consider amending indoor and outdoor amenity space requirements for mid-rise buildings on the Avenues, particularly in areas that have a high-level of community amenities and open space. (See Section 4.5.4 & 4.5.5)
- The City should initiate discussion with the Province to amend certain Ontario Building Code regulations that are major barriers to the development of mid-rise buildings. (See Section 4.5.6)
- The City should study certain Avenue segments with larger redevelopment sites, that may be appropriate for a different set of built form standards. This includes: sites that are so large they require new streets and blocks, sites that are adjacent to rail corridors (or other utilities), large sites in close proximity to subway / rail nodes, and the portion of Eglinton Avenue West between Martin Grove Road and Jane Street that has a 45 metre R.O.W. (See Section 4.5.7)

Section 1: Introduction

1.1

The Avenues

What are the "Avenues"?

The Avenues are important corridors along major streets where reurbanizaton is anticipated and encouraged to create new housing and job opportunities while improving the pedestrian environment, the look of the street, shopping opportunities and transit service for community residents.

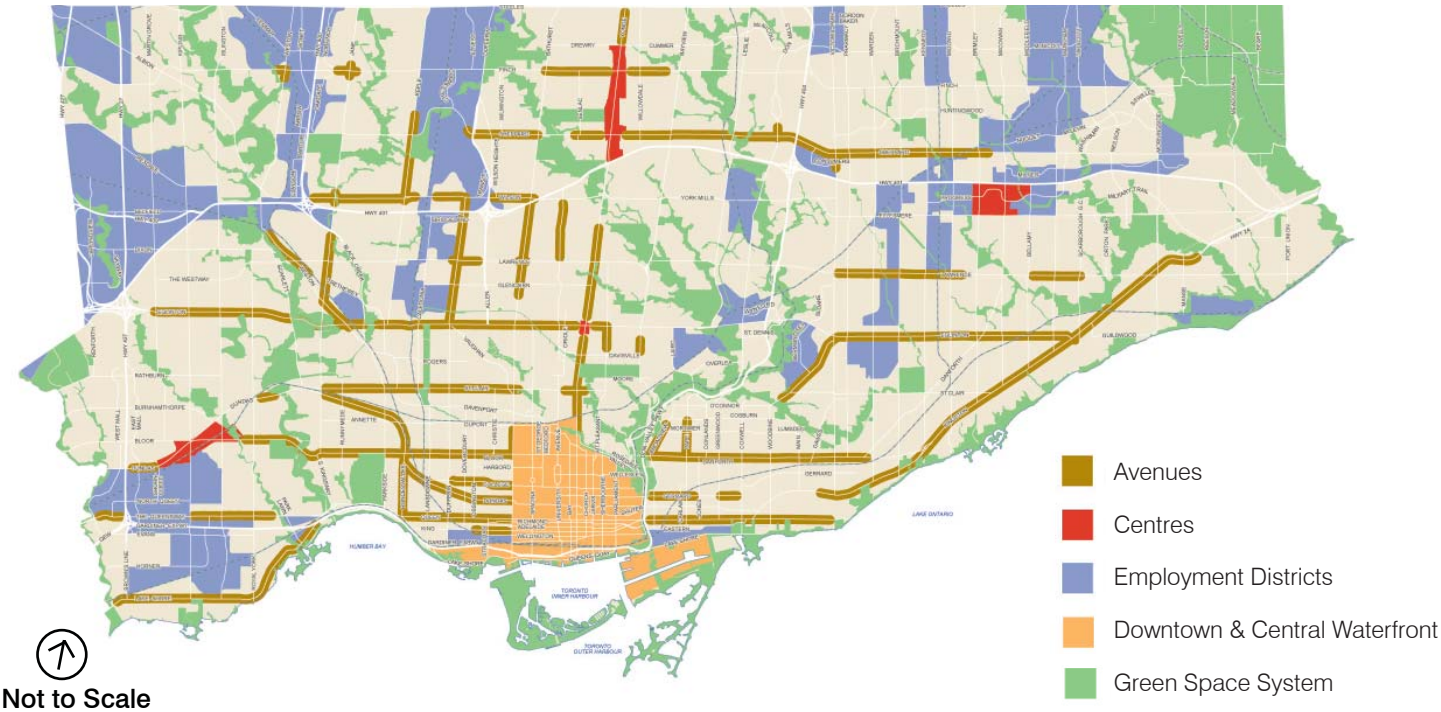
(source: Official Plan)

The City of Toronto is forecast to have approximately 3.08 million residents by 2031. Strategies for how and where to accommodate this growth are important.

The objective of this study is to develop the policies and processes that will encourage the appropriate development and "reurbanization" of the Avenues through the construction of more, and better-designed mid-rise buildings, accommodating the future population growth along Toronto's Avenues. This 'Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study' builds on the directions of the City's Official Plan.

The purpose of the City's Official Plan is to direct physical growth by:

- Identifying areas where the City wishes to see growth occur (Downtown and Central Waterfront, Centres, Employment Districts and Avenues);
- Focusing civic resources to ignite this change; and,
- Creating a new regulatory framework (i.e. Zoning By-laws and urban design guidelines) that creates certainty for development, with a degree of design flexibility, while continuing to provide the broader community with a level of comfort about the character and form of future development.



Official Plan Map 2 - Urban Structure (map should be referred to in colour).

The City has undertaken, and is currently undertaking, a number of studies and activities that have shaped the recommendations in this report. Below is a list of some of these initiatives:

- Main Street Initiative *(1987)*
- Mid-Rise Symposium *(2005)*
- Avenue Studies *(2000 - present)*
- Transit City *(2007 - present)*
- Tall Buildings - Inviting Change in Downtown Toronto *(2008 - present)*
- Toronto Green Standard *(2008 - present)*

See Appendix D: Related City Initiatives, for a summary of these initiatives.

Toronto's Official Plan encourages intensification in identified "growth areas," which comprise approximately 25% of the City's land area, including Mixed Use Areas, Employment Areas, Institutional and Regeneration Areas.

The Official Plan directs that most future growth in the City will occur in designated growth areas identified as the Downtown and Central Waterfront, Centres, Employment Areas, and Avenues. These areas are identified on Map 2 of the Official Plan - Urban Structure. The Avenues policies in the Official Plan are intended to help the City direct growth to areas with existing infrastructure, including transit, retail, services, etc., while creating vibrant, livable communities and protecting existing neighbourhoods.

What is Reurbanization?

Reurbanization is a co-ordinated approach to the redevelopment of land within the existing urban fabric to accommodate regional growth.

Reurbanization improves and makes better use of existing urban infrastructure and services before introducing new ones on the urban fringe. This helps reduce impacts on the natural environment and improves the livability of the urban region by:

- **reducing the pace at which the countryside is urbanized;**
- **preserving high quality agricultural lands to protect Toronto's food security;**
- **reducing our reliance on the private automobile;**
- **reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and,**
- **reducing our consumption of non-renewable resources.**

(Source: Official Plan)

1.2

Mid-Rise Urbanism

Toronto's neighbourhoods are one of its greatest assets. They provide a setting that has long supported a high quality of life for the City's residents. The protection of these neighbourhoods is a priority embedded in the policies that control the City's growth. This growth will be directed to areas of the City that can accommodate and support new development without disrupting the integrity of the neighbourhoods and enjoy a high level of transit and transportation service. The Official Plan has identified the Avenues as one of these areas.

The Avenues are intimately linked to the identity and vitality of the neighbourhoods that surround them. As "main streets," they have both a functional relationship, providing a range of services that are used by area residents on a daily basis, as well as a symbolic role – as the social nerve centre of communities. The character of growth on the Avenues must recognize the unique connection to these neighbourhoods through a development form that is moderate in scale and reflects high quality design and materials. This energizing growth for the City is termed as "Mid-Rise Urbanism".

The Avenues vision calls for beautiful tree-lined streets and sun-lit sidewalks, framed by carefully articulated mid-rise buildings providing a multiplicity of retail and community uses at the sidewalk level, with residential and commercial units above. As better transit service is incrementally introduced, and the population increases, the Avenues will be re-energized, supporting improved levels of commercial, retail and community services. Combined with investments in the streetscape and public realm, the setting for a vibrant community life will emerge.

This illustration at right demonstrates the potential evolution of an Avenue with a 20 metre wide R.O.W. through mid-rise built form.

A 20 metre wide R.O.W. with several sites that may accommodate potential redevelopment.

The Avenue can gradually intensify through the introduction of mid-rise buildings

Eventually the Avenues will transform as vibrant streets providing a high level of services and amenities while protecting the character of adjacent neighbourhoods

S H
A C L C

Section 2: Applying the Avenues and Mid-Rise Recommendations

2.1

Where the Recommendations Apply

The segments of the Avenues that are designated in the Official Plan as Mixed-Use Areas, Employment Areas, Institutional Areas and Regeneration Areas are the locations that are to be reurbanized and targeted for growth.

The recommended Performance Standards apply to these areas with the following exceptions: portions of Avenues where an Avenue Study is completed or underway, portions of an Avenue within a Secondary Plan Area, and portions of an Avenue that have been subject to other City-led studies that have resulted in an Official Plan Amendment and/or new Zoning By-law. See Appendix C for an outline of these areas.

The Official Plan states that: "Not all lands that fall within Avenues are designated for growth. These Avenues have been identified at a broad scale to help assess urban design, transit and service delivery issues. However, where a portion of an Avenue is designated as a Neighbourhood, the neighbourhood protection policies of Chapter 4.1 will prevail to ensure that any new development respects and reinforces the general physical character of established neighbourhoods." (Official Plan, p. 2 -15)

The different land use designations that overlap with the identification of an "Avenue" will require different approaches. As the Official Plan is clear in its intent to protect stable residential neighbourhoods, Neighbourhoods, Parks and Open Space Areas, and Natural Areas are not subject to intensification. Therefore, these areas will only be subject to streetscape improvements. Avenues, or segments of Avenues designated as Neighbourhoods will be reurbanized through improvements to the public realm so that they may become part of the overall neighbourhood and pedestrian networks. See Map 2: Avenues and Land Use Designations for the land use designations that front onto the Avenues.

In addition to contacting Planning Staff, developers/applicants should determine whether the recommendations of this study apply by following the steps outlined below:

Step 1:	Is the property on an Avenue and do the recommendations apply to this portion of the Avenue? *See Map 1: Avenues Excluded from the Study; check underlying Land Use designation in the Official Plan*
Step 2:	What is the right-of-way width of the Avenue? *See Map 3: Avenues & R.O.W. Widths and Section 2.2: How Mid-Rise Building Heights are Determined*
Step 3:	*Review the Performance Standards in Section 3*
Step 4:	Is the property in a Character Area? *See Map 4: Avenues & Character Areas; Section 2.3.1: Character Areas; and Appendix A: Character Area Study. Performance Standards 19A - G may be applicable.*
Step 5:	Is the property in an area that requires retail-commercial at-grade? *See Map 5: Avenues & Retail-Commercial At-Grade; Section 2.3.2: Avenues Where Retail-Commercial At-Grade is Required; and Appendix B: Retail Study.*

2.1.1 Land Use Designations & the Avenues

Mixed Use Areas & Employment Areas

The intent of this Study is primarily to identify Performance Standards that will be appropriate for the areas designated as Mixed Use Areas and Employment Areas. The Performance Standards in Section 3 generally apply to these areas.

Not all Performance Standards will apply uniformly across the Avenues. For instance, the Avenues Character Area Study and the Avenues Retail Study, outline special considerations that will influence the application of the Performance Standards.

Neighbourhoods, Parks and Open Space Areas, and Natural Areas

The creation of cohesive and continuous Avenues will result from investments in a well-designed public realm and streetscape. Even though Neighbourhoods, Parks and Open Space Areas, and Natural Areas are not subject to intensification or reurbanization, the streetscapes, plazas, and parkettes that abut the Avenues should adhere to Performance Standards that address the requirement for a high-quality public realm.

Apartment Neighbourhoods

The Official Plan acknowledges that significant growth is generally not intended within developed Apartment Neighbourhoods. However, there are opportunities for public realm improvements and there may be opportunities for compatible infill on sites that are underutilized and have sufficient space to accommodate new buildings fronting Avenues.

Sites on Avenue segments that are designated as Apartment Neighbourhoods must comply with the Development Criteria in Apartment Neighbourhoods contained in Sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 of the Official Plan. If sites/proposals are compliant with these policies (as per the City's direction), then new mid-rise buildings should refer to the Performance Standards contained in this document.

Other City initiatives may apply in Apartment Neighbourhoods, including Tower Renewal (see Appendix D: Other City Initiatives for a summary).

Table 1 below outlines the land use designations in the Official Plan and how the street should be treated when an Avenue coincides with that designation. The Avenues will either be subject to reurbanization through intensification or simply reurbanization in the form of streetscape improvements (e.g. within the public realm).

Table 1: Avenues and Official Plan land use designations.

Official Plan Land Use Designations	**Approach**
Neighbourhoods	Streetscape Improvements only
Apartment Neighbourhoods	Potential for Infill & Streetscape Improvements *
Parks & Open Space Areas, Natural Areas	Streetscape Improvements only
Mixed Use Areas	Growth & Streetscape Improvements
Employment Areas	Growth & Streetscape Improvements
Institutional Areas	Growth & Streetscape Improvements
Regeneration Areas	Growth & Streetscape Improvements
Utility Corridors	Streetscape Improvements only

** Refer to Official Plan Policies 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 for further information on Apartment Neighbourhoods.*

Map 1: Areas Excluded from the Study

Not to Scale

Portions of the Avenues with Avenue Studies, Secondary Plans and other City-initiated Studies will not be subject to the recommendations of this Study.

STEELES
LESLIE
DON MILLS
GORDON BAKER
PHARMACY
WARDEN
BIRCHMOUNT
KENNEDY
MIDLAND
BRIMLEY
McCOWAN
MIDDLEFIELD
McNICOLL
MARKHAM
TAPSCOTT
FINCH
HWY 404
VICTORIA PARK
HUNTINGWOOD
NUGGET
McLEVIN
NEILSON
MEADOWVALE
SHEPPARD
MILNER
HWY 401
PROGRESS
MILITARY TRAIL
ELLESMERE
DON VALLEY PKWY
BELLAMY
SCARBOROUGH GOLF CLUB
ORTON PARK
MORNINGSIDE
KINGSTON
HWY 2A
PORT UNION
LAWRENCE
EGLINTON
GUILDWOOD
OVERLEA
McCOWAN
KINGSTON
ST CLAIR
O'CONNOR
COSBURN
MORTIMER
DONLANDS
GREENWOOD
DAWES
DANFORTH
GERRARD
JONES
COXWELL
WOODBINE
MAIN
Avenues (refer to Official Plan Map 2 - Urban Structure)
Areas excluded from the Mid-Rise Performance Standards (Avenue Studies, Secondary Plans, other City Initiated Study)

Map 2: Avenues & Land Use Designations

The total length of all the City's Avenues is approximately 162 km, which equates to 324 km of Avenues "frontage". Approximately seventy-five percent of this frontage is designated for growth, while the balance will remain stable.

Avenues as illustrated on Map 2 - Urban Structure, showing all land use designations fronting onto the Avenues (map should be referred to in colour).

Mixed Use Areas = 70%
Employment Areas = 4%
Institutional Areas = less than 1%
Regeneration Areas = less than 1%
Apartment Neighbourhoods = 9%
Neighbourhoods = 10%

Growth Areas

Potential for Infill

Parks & Open Space Areas, Natural Areas = 6%

(Percentages have been estimated by the Consultant Team)

Not to Scale

Ideal Condominium - College Street

550 Wellington - Wellington Street [2]

George Brown College - Richmond Street East

2.2

How Mid-Rise Building Heights are Determined

Mid-rise buildings are no taller than the width of the street right-of-way or between 5 and 11 storeys.

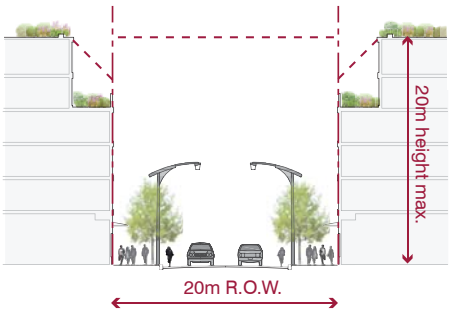
The “as-of-right” height of a mid-rise building should be determined by a series of factors. The potential maximum height is established based on a 1:1 ratio where the maximum height of a building is equivalent to the width of the right-of-way which the building faces. The ability to realize the maximum height is tempered by angular planes applied to the front of the site and the rear of the site respectively (see Performance Standards 4 and 5) . Not all sites on the Avenues will be able to achieve the maximum height, because some sites may be physically constrained. The dimensions of the development lot – particularly lot depth – impact the ability of a given site to be built to its maximum height.

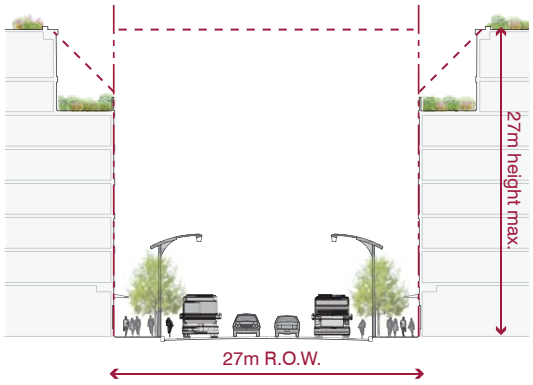
The Avenue right-of-ways (R.O.W.) fall into one of seven widths: 20, 23, 27, 30, 33, 36 and 45 metres - see Map 3: Avenues and R.O.W. Widths. There are four widths - 20, 27, 30 and 36 metres that prevail on the Avenues, while the others - 23, 33 and 45, are limited. In the context of the Avenues, which generally range in R.O.W. width from 20 to 36 metres, this translates into as-of-right mixed-use buildings that range in height from 6 to 11 storeys, and commercial buildings from 5 to 9 storeys. For instance, an Avenue right-of-way width of 20 metres would result in a mid-rise/mixed-use building of up to 20 metres in height or 6 storeys. R.O.W. widths of 27, 30 and 36 metres would result in mixed-use buildings of 8, 9 and 11 storeys respectively.

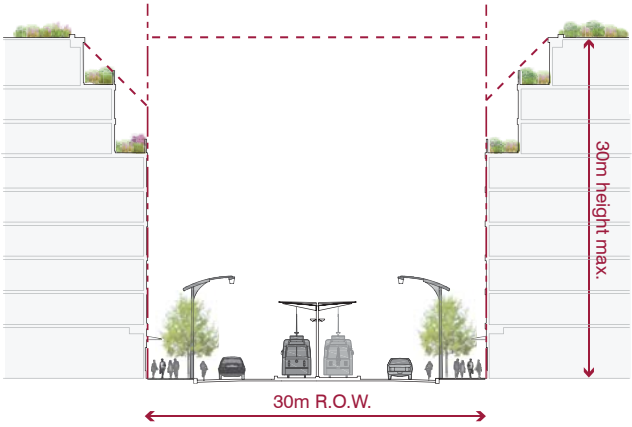
The Saint James
Image Courtesy of Quadrangle Architects Ltd.

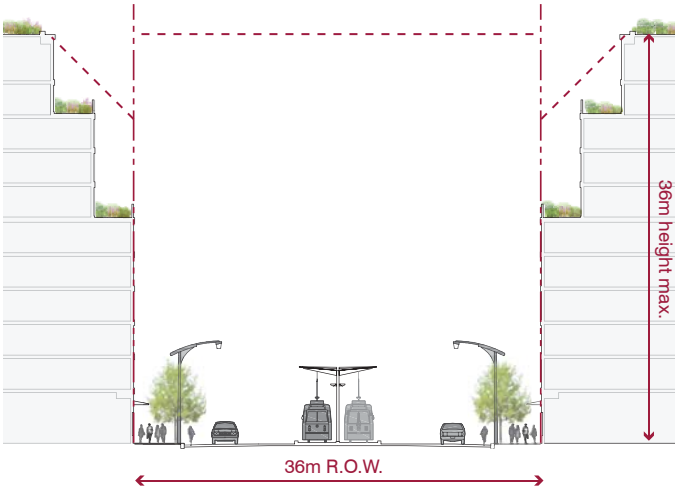
Massey Harris Lofts - King Street West

Trinity Park Lofts - Queen Street West









Maximum allowable height is determined by the width of the right-of-way (Note, in some cases, where sidewalk width is not sufficient, front setbacks from the property line will be necessary. This will not affect the overall height or angular plane provisions applied to the building).

For the purposes of this study, a mid-rise building ranges from 5 storeys to 11 storeys.

The intent of this study is to provide guidance explicitly on the design of mid-rise buildings - therefore the recommendations are not intended to define a base of a tower or tall building.

See Map 3: Avenues and R.O.W. Widths for the widths of Existing Major Streets overlaid with the Avenues.

Table 2

R.O.W. Width[1]	Mixed-Use		Commercial	
	storeys	height (m)[2]	storeys	height (m)[3]
20m	6	19.5	5	18.9
27m	8	25.5	7	26.1
30m	9	28.5	8	29.7
36m	11	34.5	9	33.3

Assumptions

1 - R.O.W. widths as identified in Official Plan Map 3

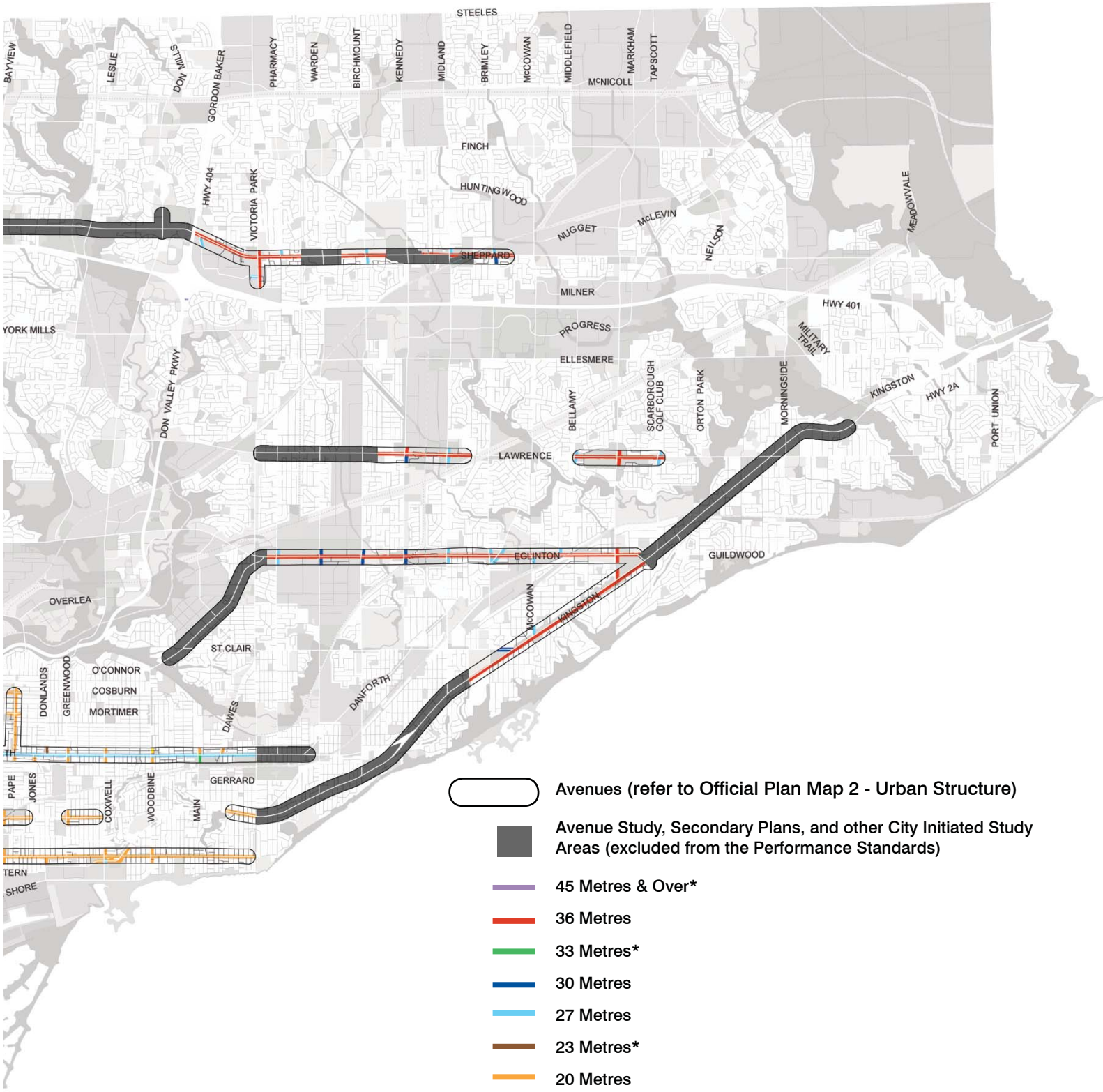
2 - Mixed Use heights assume 4.5m for ground floor and 3.0m for all floors above

3 - Commercial heights assume 4.5m for ground floor and 3.6m for all floors above

Map 3: Avenues & R.O.W. Widths

Not to Scale

Map should be referred to in colour



Avenues (refer to Official Plan Map 2 - Urban Structure)

Avenue Study, Secondary Plans, and other City Initiated Study Areas (excluded from the Performance Standards)

45 Metres & Over*

36 Metres

33 Metres*

30 Metres

27 Metres

23 Metres*

20 Metres

Non-Uniform

** non-prevailing widths*

According to Official Plan Map 3 - Right-of-Way Widths Associated with Existing Major Streets, the Avenue right-of-ways fall into one of seven widths: 20, 23, 27, 30, 33, 36, and 45 metres. There are four widths - 20, 27, 30 and 36 metres that prevail. In instances where the right-of-way width is 23 and 33 metres, maximum building heights should not exceed the R.O.W. width. The 45 metre wide R.O.W. along Eglinton Avenue West should be considered for area-specific study.

2.3

Heritage & Retail Analysis

From a review of the sixteen completed Avenues Studies and a visual survey of the Avenues throughout the City, it is clear that there is no “one size fits all” approach to the development of the Avenues. The Avenues differ in many respects, including right-of-way widths, lot dimensions, urban context, historical evolution, prevailing land uses, traffic volumes, transit service and retail environment. It is recognized that not all Avenues or segments of Avenues have, or should be planned to have, the same character.

The categorization of the various Avenues is an important component of this Study.

The previous section identified where the Performance Standards will apply - primarily Mixed-Use Areas and Employment Areas, and possibly some Apartment Neighbourhoods - this study proposes that there are additional unique conditions which relate to the character of the area and the nature of retail on these Avenues. This section includes a categorization of the Avenues based upon the information from the Character Area Study and Retail Study.

See Appendices A and B for the full reports.

2.3.1 Character Areas

To date, the City of Toronto has not undertaken a full survey of cultural resources or historic places. This study outlines areas that are currently identified as Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs), HCDs Under Study, or Areas that Warrant Further Heritage Analysis, and identifies an additional consideration, identified in this study as "Character Areas". Character Areas were identified primarily through visual analysis and mapping as areas with an existing character that should be considered in the design of redevelopment projects on the Avenues.

While the scope of this study cannot provide full analysis and recommendations for each area, it identifies their location and provides the historical context of each area. The Character Area Study highlights areas along the Avenues that should be noted for their natural, built or cultural significance to the neighbourhood, Avenue, or City as a whole. (See Appendix A: Character Area Study).

A range of Performances Standards have also been created which may be applied to these Character Areas. Appreciation of the character of an area should be carefully considered during the design, review and implementation process.

The intent of identifying "Character Areas", is not to prohibit redevelopment but to highlight the role that the existing context can play in shaping the form and function of new mid-rise buildings on the Avenues.

Character Areas

Each Avenue has been studied to identify portions of Avenues where there is an existing character that should be considered in the development of new mid-rise buildings. These Character Areas have characteristics that require additional consideration of the existing context in terms of architectural and urban design. Additional Performance Standards (Performance Standards 19A - G) may apply in these areas.

Sections of Avenues may include significant built, cultural and natural resources. These can be designated, listed or simply identified as significant. The Character Areas are typically on a much larger scale than individual sites or even heritage conservation districts, and may include:

- Significant groupings of identified and/or listed heritage buildings;
- Identified Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs) or areas identified for study as potential heritage conservation districts;
- Natural heritage areas such as parks, and ravine systems;
- Groups of buildings that have potential cultural significance related to their use rather than architectural merit;
- Portions of an Avenue that contain a cultural use that should be considered during a process of redevelopment (i.e. ethnically specific commerce / cultural activities); and,
- Portions of an Avenue that have adjacencies to built form that may require special consideration during the process of intensification (i.e. Apartment Neighbourhoods).

Thus, a Character Area will be of significance for the Avenues if it demonstrates identifiable natural, built or cultural themes associated with the underlying historical development of the specific Avenue.

Using the Character Area Description & Performance Standards

Performance Standards 19A - G will provide guidance on massing and architectural character for the portions of Avenues identified as Character Areas. Performance Standards 19A - G may also apply to areas not identified as Character Areas. The identification of the Character Areas indicates that consideration should be given to segment specific attributes during the development process and the Performance Standards will be used as guidance for mid-rise building character in a given segment. It will allow staff to review developments and give guidance where a Character Area has been identified and will help developers to design buildings that respond to existing segment attributes or historical context. The Character Area descriptions and associated Performance Standards are not intended to be overly restrictive, they are merely provided to give guidance.

There are four types of culturally significant, built and natural resources along the Avenues:

1. **Existing Heritage Conservation Districts (see: http://www.toronto.ca/heritage-preservation/heritage_districts.htm)**
2. **Heritage Conservation Districts under study (see: http://www.toronto.ca/heritage-preservation/heritage_districts.htm)**
3. **Areas that Warrant Further Heritage Analysis (see: http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2008/law1118.pdf)**
4. **Character Areas**

HCDs already have guidelines designed to protect and enhance their special character as redevelopment occurs, and this Study does not intend to change these. HCDs Under Study will be subject to guidelines upon completion of their study.

Areas that Warrant Further Heritage Analysis are identified in the City's By-law No. 1118-2008 and Official Plan Amendment No. 38. The Zoning by-law and Official Plan Amendment authorized the use of Section 37 funding for heritages studies in or within close proximity to the areas identified by the City-led Study.

Existing HCDs, HCDs Under Study, and Areas that Warrant Further Heritage Analysis, include areas of an Avenue that contain:

- Identified and/or designated built and/or natural cultural heritage resources.
- Potential built and natural cultural heritage resources that are not listed or designated.

The desired outcomes for these Avenues is:

- Conservation of the character of the area.
- Alterations and infill development that are sensitive to, and strengthen the character of the area.
- Development that is in accordance with Performance Standard 19A - G, the Ontario Heritage Toolkit and the Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for Historic Places.

Character Areas typically consist of a healthy mixed-use fabric. They have been identified as sections of an Avenue that contain potential built, natural, and/or cultural heritage resources that are not listed or designated. These are not intended to become HCDs, but have a character that will be important to consider as redevelopment occurs.

New mid-rise development in these Character Areas should:

- Mitigate impacts of new development that may destabilize the function and character of the area.
- Be developed through alterations and infill development that are sensitive to, and where appropriate, strengthen the character of the area.
- Reference Performance Standard 19A - G

Process

Along the Avenues, and especially within Character Areas, the diversity of building typologies, heritage buildings, streetscapes and existing city fabric requires that each new building consider and respond to the surrounding context.

Within Character Areas, it will be especially important that new buildings recognize and reflect the important elements that define the existing context. The Character Area Study (See Appendix A) contains a brief description and overview of each of the Character Areas.

In order to ensure that developments respect this character, this Study recommends an addition to the submission process for buildings within a Character Area. Following a preliminary meeting with City Planning Staff, developers, owners, and/or architects will be asked to submit a brief narrative - a "Character Area Response Statement" - that outlines how the design integrates with, or reflects important elements of, the existing context. The Character Area summaries may provide a basis for this. This narrative should accompany drawings submitted for the Site Plan Review Process.

The steps below should be followed for proposed developments in a Character Area:

Step 1: Is the property within a Character Area?
See Map 4: Avenues & Character Areas

Step 2: Read the Character Area description
See Appendix A

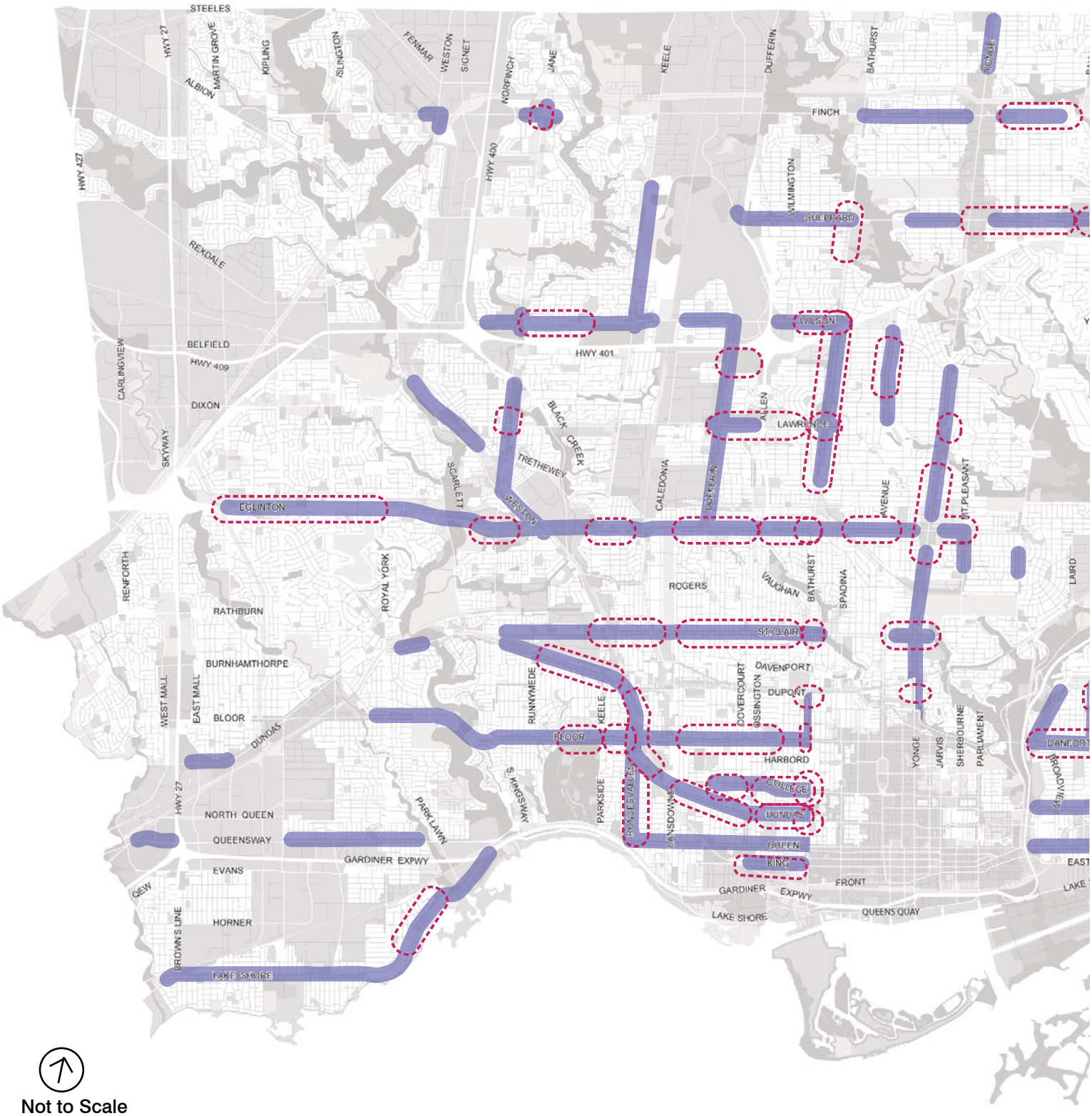
Step 3: Determine which Character Area Performance Standards should apply
See Performance Standards 19 A - G (Character Area descriptions in Appendix A identify some of the specific Character Area Performance Standards that should apply, but others may apply)

Step 4: Prepare a "Character Area Response Statement"
Prepare a statement that identifies how the proposed design reflects the key attributes of the Character Area. Some attributes are identified in the written descriptions, but the applicant is responsible for a more detailed response.

The Character Area Response Statement should respond to the following:

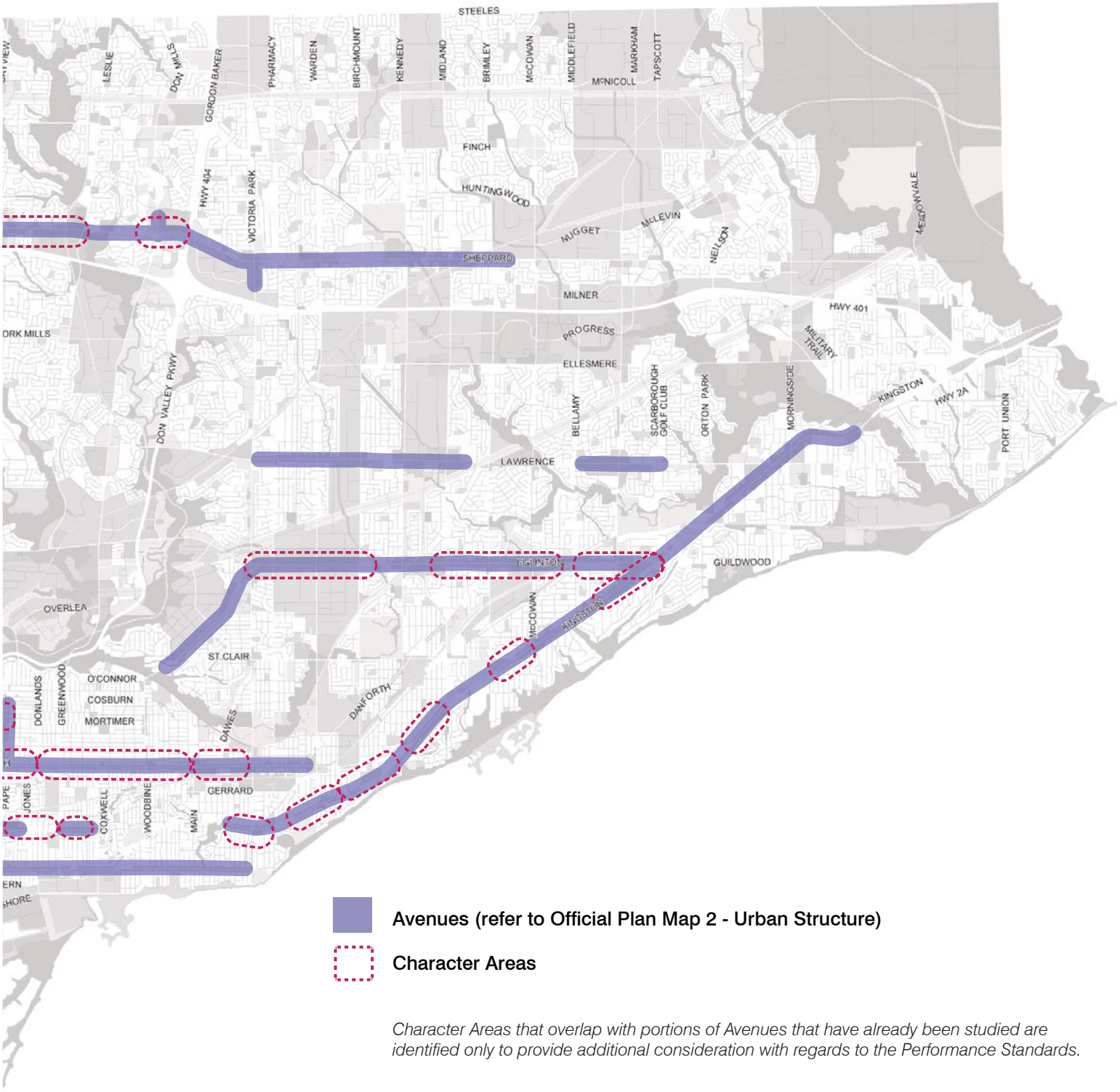
1. Does the written description refer to specific Character Area Performance Standards that should be adhered to? If yes, how does the proposed development respond to these Performance Standards?
2. Are other Character Area Performance Standards applicable? If yes, how does the proposed development respond to these Performance Standards?
3. Please prepare a statement about the existing context of the Avenue segment, and describe how the proposed development fits into this context. Description of the proposed development should include, but is not limited to, the following: building height, openings & glazing, building materials, and cornice line.

Map 4: Avenues & Character Areas



Not to Scale

Portions of the Avenues identified as Character Areas (as prepared by E.R.A. Architects). See Appendix A for Character Area mapping of each individual Avenue.



Avenues (refer to Official Plan Map 2 - Urban Structure)

Character Areas

Character Areas that overlap with portions of Avenues that have already been studied are identified only to provide additional consideration with regards to the Performance Standards.

2.3.2 Avenues Where Retail-Commercial At-Grade is Required

Consistent at-grade retail uses lining the edges of the streetscape is a fundamental component in the community role and design character of the Avenues.

Goals, Objectives, and Criteria

The overarching goal for the retail analysis is to answer the following question: *"Where is at-grade retail required within Mixed Use Areas on the Avenues?"*

The objectives for the Retail Study are:

1. To enhance community amenity
2. To support pedestrian amenity, comfort, and safety
3. To support (maintain, improve) the health and vibrancy of the shopping area
4. To provide adequate and appropriate retail services for the local neighbourhood
5. To provide space for new businesses
6. To support adjacent transit

Existing Retail Areas on the Avenues

The retail categorization analysis began with an understanding of where existing and future communities are located or evolving. This is a key driver in determining where retail is required and supports an understanding of the hierarchy of retail on the Avenues.

The categories of existing retail on the Avenues are generally:

Established Districts (e.g. Danforth Avenue from Broadview Avenue to Pape Avenue, The Beach, Bayview Avenue, The Junction) These stable communities are supported by stable main-street type retail corridors, with a sizeable residential base that supports local shopping such as grocery stores, drug stores, banks, and other local-serving businesses. Primarily, there are opportunities for mixed-use retail infill to strengthen the continuity of these corridors.

Transitioning Districts (e.g. Cliffside Village, Danforth Avenue east of Jones Avenue, Queen Street West from Trinity Bellwoods to Dufferin Street, Dundas Street West at Highway 427, Weston Road at Lawrence Avenue West) These places have a good residential base in the community but there may be greater opportunities to increase the residential density in the area (beyond small infill projects) and thereby affect the demand for retail space to a greater degree. The City will want to enhance these corridors and provide greater continuity of the retail at grade environment.

Suburban Avenues (e.g. Sheppard Avenue East, portions of Kingston Road) The existing retail situation along many of these corridors is not well defined. The current retail function is not in the form of main-street type retail but rather in the form of plazas, malls, and freestanding buildings, which are primarily vehicle dependent. This is the most difficult Avenue portion to plan for with particular concern regarding phasing of the developments and the ability for the mixed-use developments to support retail.

Undefined Areas There are segments of the Avenues within the urban, built-up areas of the City that do not have a strong community role/function and it is unlikely that they will be able to support a community role in the future (e.g., Queen Street East from Coxwell Avenue to Kingston Road, Finch Avenue West, Dundas Street West south of Humberside Avenue). Retail may be permitted but not required at grade as it should not interfere or be overly competitive with the adjacent nearby corridors that rely on the same residents for retail shopping.

Retail At-Grade Recommendations

There are three categories for retail at-grade within Mixed Use Areas on the Avenues: Required, Encouraged and Permitted; and these are outlined below. Map 5: Avenues and Retail-Commerical At-Grade illustrates only the first category - those areas where retail at-grade is required.

1. Required:

Commercial-Retail (non-residential) would be required in the following circumstances:

- Established Districts – Examples include Yonge Street from Eglinton Avenue to Glenview Avenue, Bloor Street West from Jane Street to High Park, Queen Street W. from Roncesvalles Avenue to Dufferin Street

2. Encouraged:

Commercial-Retail (non-residential) would be encouraged in the following circumstances:

- Transitioning Urban Communities – Examples include Broadview Avenue, Dundas Street West east of Jane Street in The Junction
- Suburban Avenues – Where there is a current or foreseeable urban community that can support main street type retail activity, primarily anchored at key intersections.

Note: Where retail at grade is “Encouraged,” it would be permitted, but further study is needed to identify if there are portions of these Avenues where retail should be “Required.”

3. Permitted:

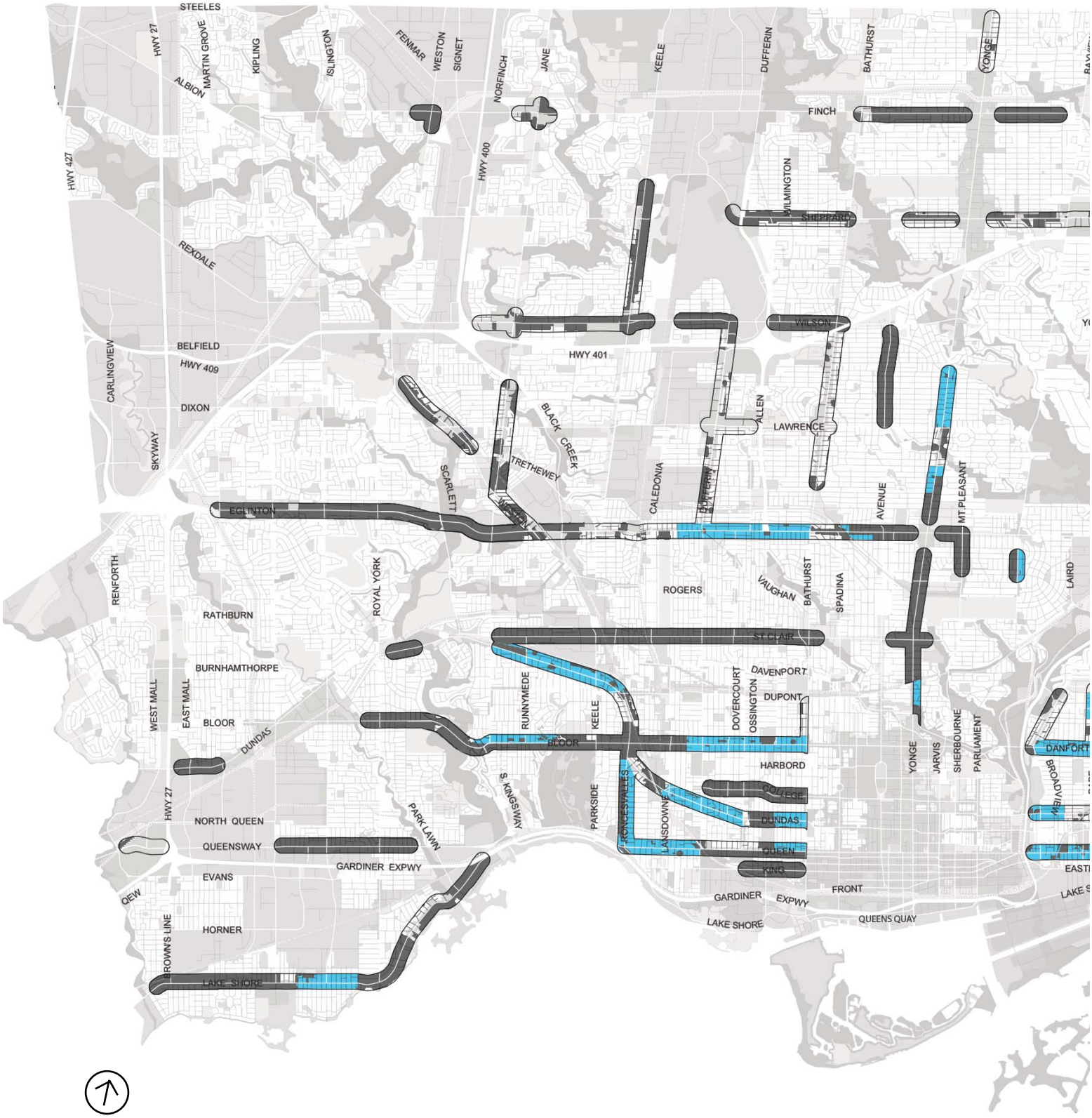
Commercial-Retail (non-residential) should be permitted, but not required, in sections of the Avenues that are Undefined Areas. The retail may be in the form of destination type retailers that draw from outside the local trade area. Additional considerations such as parking, accessibility, and visibility will be required. Typically, rents will be lower and the retail uses tend to be larger.

These areas may be suburban corridors that are transitional, cannot support double-loaded retail, or are not long enough to support a community retail shopping function. Other uses may also be considered such as community centres, schools, learning institutions and residential uses. There may be an opportunity for ground floor residential uses to transition into retail functions at a future date. Hybrid developments may also be considered, for example, where there is retail at the corners of a building or block, but the frontage may include other uses such as residential along the length of the building.

Areas where commercial-retail is permitted may also include existing retail areas that are already thriving and need additional residential population, not additional retail.

See Appendix B for the full Retail Study.

Map 5: Avenues & Retail-Commercial At-Grade



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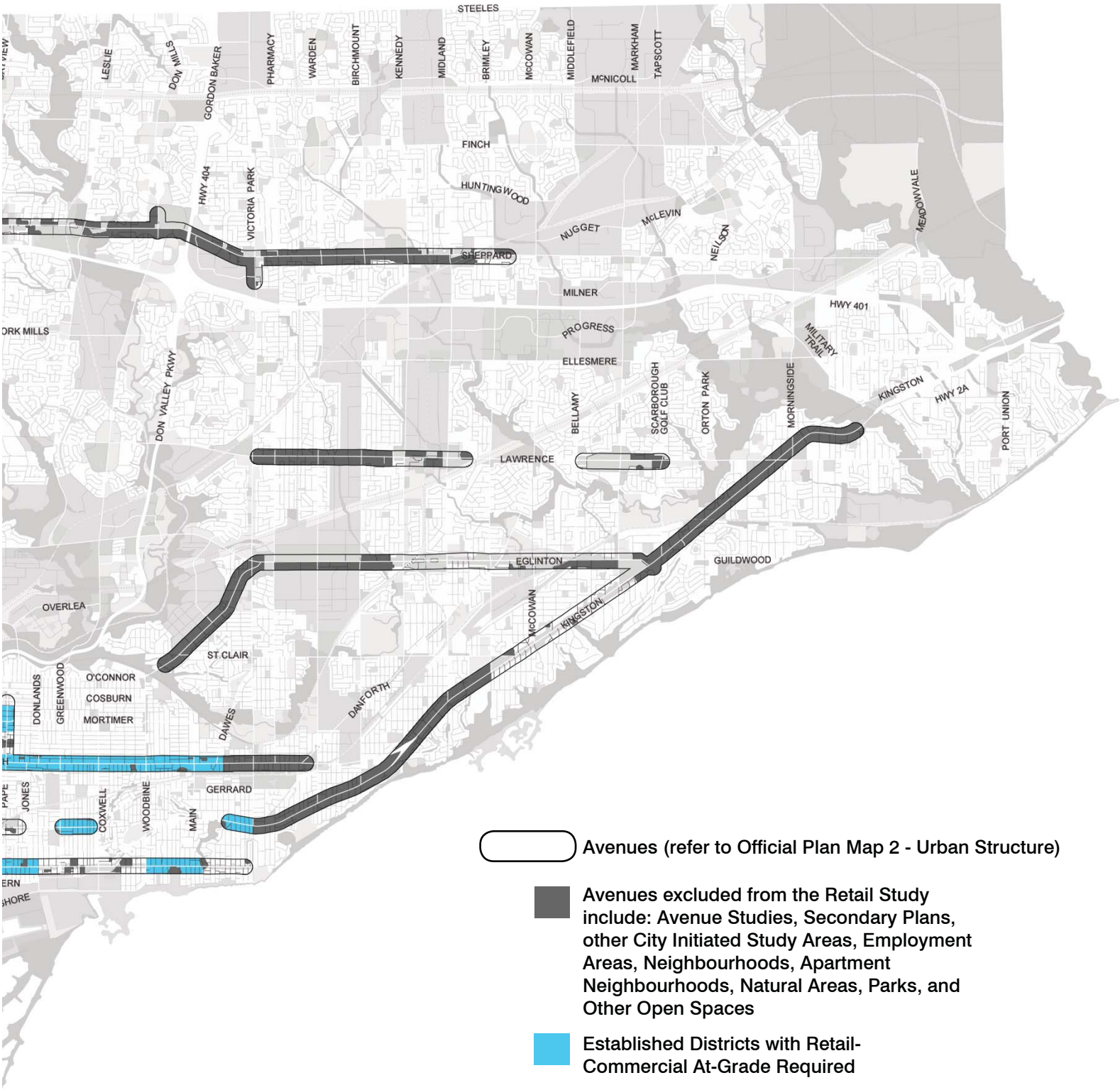


'Areas Recommended for Further Consideration for Retail-Commercial' have been identified by the study consultants as areas where further analysis is warranted to determine if mid-rise buildings should be required to include retail-commercial space on the ground floor (Retail Encouraged), based on factors such as the existing commercial character of the area and future prospects for successful pedestrian-oriented commercial development. It should be noted that the Commercial Residential (CR) Zone that will apply to all Mixed Use Areas will permit retail/commercial uses. See Appendix B for further detail.

Section 3: Performance Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings

3.1
Introduction

This section proposes a series of Performance Standards that will guide the design of mid-rise buildings in a manner appropriate to the Avenues.

The Performance Standards are guided by the objective to create healthy, livable and vibrant main streets while protecting the stability and integrity of adjacent neighbourhoods. To this end, built form controls embedded in these standards will ensure that the Avenues develop in an appropriate and context-sensitive manner. The Performance Standards are intended to provide simple, straight-forward guidance for those seeking to develop mid-rise projects on the Avenues. Key provisions are as follows:

- Buildings are moderate in height - no taller than the R.O.W. is wide;
- Buildings provide an appropriate transition in scale to adjacent neighbourhoods;
- Sidewalks are wide enough to include and support trees, generate a lively pedestrian culture and ensure accessibility for all;
- Sidewalks on the Avenues enjoy at least five hours of sunlight from the spring through to the fall;
- The ground floor of buildings provide uses that enliven sidewalks and create safe pedestrian conditions;
- The public realm should be protected and enhanced by limiting vehicle access from the Avenue, encouraging shared access, and creating a public laneway system that is accessed from side streets;
- Streetscape and building design reflects excellence in sustainability, urban design and architecture, recognizing the important public role of the Avenues in defining the quality of life for the city and its neighbourhoods; and,
- Mid-rise development sites located within Existing HCDs, HCDs Under Study, areas that warrant further heritage analysis, and Character Areas (see Section 2.3.1), should reflect local conditions and reference additional design guidelines that promote “context sensitive” intensification.

Key recommendations contained in this section are intended to form the basis for a new as-of-right zoning for mid-rise buildings on the Avenues. This new zoning will apply mainly to those Avenue segments designated as Mixed-Use Areas and Employment Areas (see Section 2.1: Where the Recommendations Apply). It is anticipated that this new zoning may reduce the need to prepare area specific studies for all segments. However, certain areas of the Avenues with unique characteristics may continue to require area specific study.

Through an as-of-right zoning strategy and other changes to City processes (see Section 4: Recommendations), the City will provide a level of certainty to the development process that is absent today. Land owners and developers working within this new regulatory framework will know how much they can build and the general timeframes they can expect for the application process. In return, they will be expected to build to a high standard of design excellence. The community will be offered a greater degree of assurance that the standards controlling building heights and massing will be adhered to.

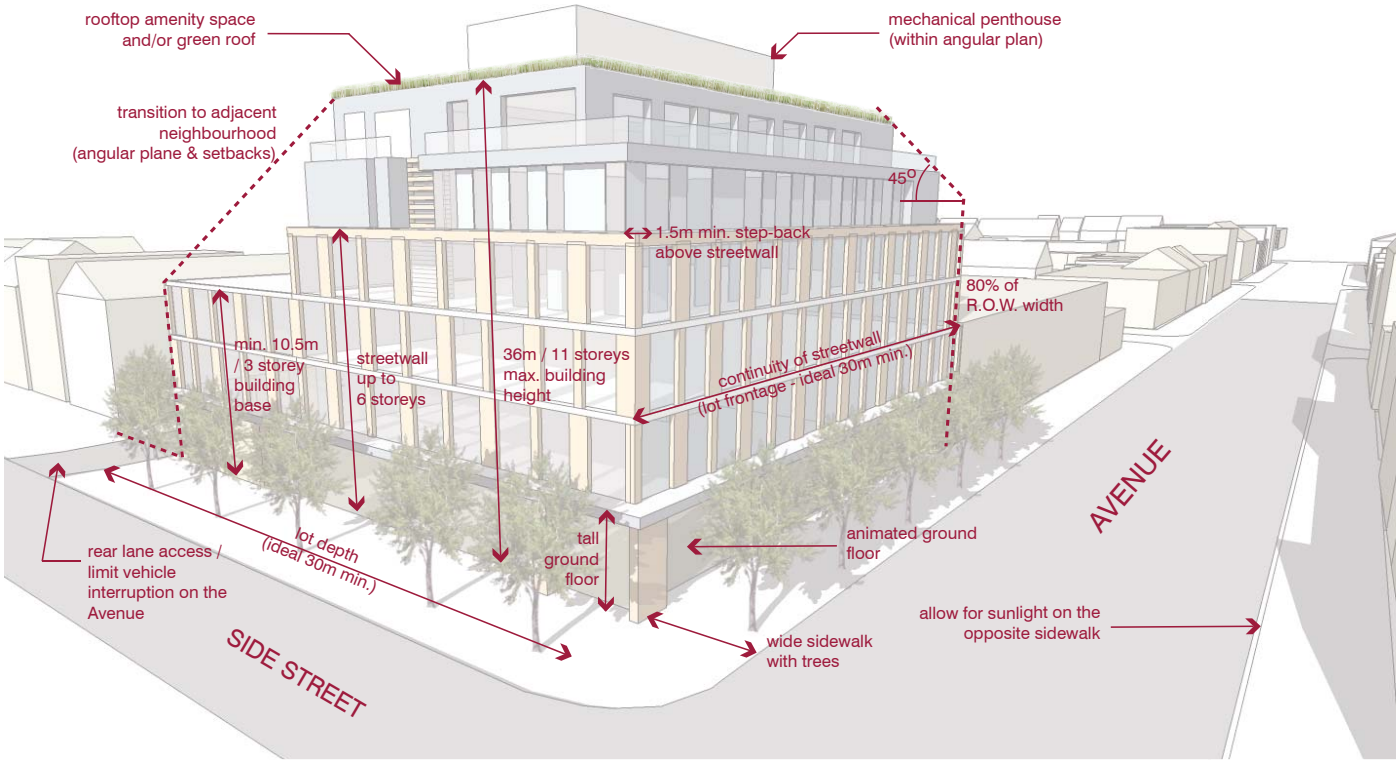


Diagram illustrating key components of the Performance Standards.

How can Performance Standards help create great Mid-Rise buildings on the Avenues?

Performance Standards are based on best principles (Official Plan policies) and best practices (urban design criteria and guidelines) and will guide the design of mid-rise buildings and ensure they are responsive to both their existing and planned context.

The creation and implementation of Performance Standards for mid-rise buildings will help to ensure high quality, appropriately-scaled mid-rise urban form along the Avenues. The creation of well-designed, pedestrian-scaled streets will result in mid-rise buildings that are of the highest design character and respond to their district and city-wide context.

Successful mid-rise buildings employ design strategies such as street-oriented character, massing that responds to all frontages, a variety of architectural detail and context-sensitive massing. The design of Avenues-oriented buildings must be mindful of limiting shadows on sidewalks and neighbouring properties, and should stimulate pedestrian environments through the careful use of scale, setbacks and step-backs.

Implementation of the Performance Standards

Section 3.2 outlines Performance Standards recommended by this study.

The Performance Standards refer to an integrated set of measurable criteria used to establish how existing and planned buildings behave towards each other or “perform” in relation to a set of criteria or principles, within an area specific setting or context. Some Performance Standards include criteria (e.g. Design Quality) that are not as easily measurable and provide guidance on urban design quality and character within the context of this study.

Some of the following Performance Standards define requirements that could be integrated into new zoning by-laws, while others will be used as design guidelines to complement the zoning regulations.

Exceptions to the Performance Standards

When implementing the urban design recommendations of this section, whether through zoning or design guidelines, it is important to recognize that exceptions may sometimes be warranted and that at times a project that strives for excellence in design can demonstrate that a specific guideline is not appropriate in that instance. It is the responsibility of the designer / developer / builder to demonstrate to the City where this exception exists and it is at the discretion of the City to support or not support a justification. In cases where the City requires further review of applications, the City’s Design Review Panel may assist the process.

3.1.1 Using the Performance Standards

The application of the Performance Standards will vary according to location on the Avenues (i.e. width of the R.O.W., Character Area, Retail Priority Area) as well as physical site characteristics (i.e. lot depth and width, topography), and site location (i.e. corner or mid-block sites). The following Key Considerations are provided to give users of this document a step-by-step guide to determining which Performance Standards to use, and how they will apply in a site-specific manner. These steps are provided as a guide only, and it is recommended that the Performance Standards be read it in their entirety.

Key Considerations

1. What is the maximum allowable height?
   Refer to Performance Standard 1 for R.O.W. widths and provisions for maximum allowable heights
2. What angular planes will apply to the rear?
   The property dimensions and land use to the rear will influence applicability of the rear transition. Refer to Performance Standards 5A - 5D
3. What provisions will apply to the side property?
   Is the property on a corner or mid-block location? Refer to Performance Standards 6, 8A - 8E, and 13
4. Will front setbacks be required?
   What is the width of the existing sidewalks? In combination with the width of the R.O.W., this will determine if front setbacks are applicable. Refer to Performance Standard 7 (setbacks will vary by use i.e. commercial-retail or residential at-grade).
5. Is there an existing public lane at the rear of the property?
   Refer to Performance Standards 5A - 5D, 16A and 16B
6. Is the property in a Character Area?
   Refer to Performance Standards 19 A - G, and Appendix A: Character Area Study
7. Is the property in an area where retail at grade is required?
   Refer to Performance Standard 3, and Appendix B: Retail Study
8. Is the use at grade (fronting the Avenue) residential?
   Refer first to Section 2.4.2: Recommendations for Retail At Grade, and refer to Performance Standards 3 and 16

3.1.2 Optimal Site Conditions

A thorough review of the Avenues existing context reveals that no two Avenues are identical, nor are there sites with identical characteristics or conditions. This section outlines some of the ideal site conditions for the optimal development of a mid-rise building within the context of this study.

1. Table 3 identifies the maximum allowable heights based on R.O.W. width.

   To achieve these heights, minimum lot depths are required as per Table 4. These depths assume the integration of:

   - angular planes - front and rear;
   - setbacks, including rear lanes;
   - a depth of 11.6 metres for the uppermost floor at the maximum height (identified as a minimum dimension for a double-loaded corridor), following the application of the angular planes; and
   - potential for typical below-grade parking layouts, including ramps and access.

   See section diagrams on opposite page.

   Mid-rise buildings may be developed on properties shallower than those identified in Table 4. Generally, a lot depth of approximately 30 metres will permit the development of a 5 to 6-storey mid-rise building and can integrate below-grade parking. For example, to achieve a top floor of 11.6 metres on a 6-storey building, a depth of 32.6 metres is required (see section diagrams on opposite page).

   The optimal conditions are dependent on a combination of both lot width and depth.

Table 3

R.O.W. Width[1]	Mixed-Use		Commercial	
	storeys	height (m)[2]	storeys	height (m)[3]
20m	6	19.5	5	18.9
27m	8	25.5	7	26.1
30m	9	28.5	8	29.7
36m	11	34.5	9	33.3

Assumptions

1 - R.O.W. widths as identified in Official Plan Map 3

2 - Mixed Use heights assume 4.5m for ground floor and 3.0m for all floors above

3 - Commercial heights assume 4.5m for ground floor and 3.6m for all floors above

Table 4

R.O.W. Width	Lot Depth
	Ideal Minimum
20m	32.6m
27m	41.0m
30m	44.6m
36m	51.8m

Assumes a depth of 11.6 metres at the uppermost height per R.O.W. (using a setback of 7.5m & 45-degree angular plane from 10.5m above the setback).

2. Minimum lot widths of 30 metres will:
   - allow for the integration of structured on-site parking;
   - be able to incorporate side step-backs at upper storeys; and
   - potentially encourage property owners to consider consolidation of narrow properties.

3. Other ideal lot conditions include:
   - existing rear lane or potential to extend a rear lane system; and
   - adequate sidewalk widths of 4.8 to 6.0 metres.

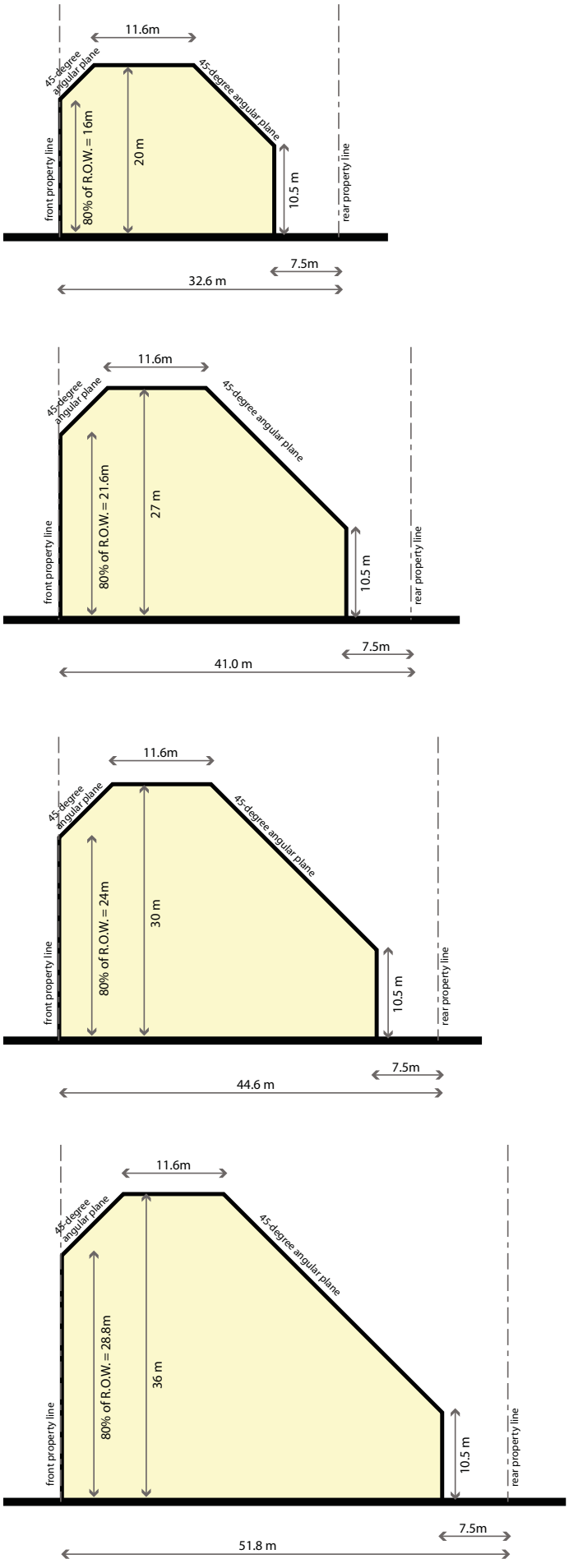


Illustration of ideal minimum lot depths by R.O.W. width. Rear set back can include public lane where they exist.

3.2
Performance Standards

1. Maximum Allowable Height
The maximum allowable height of buildings on the Avenues will be no taller than the width of the Avenue right-of-way, up to a maximum mid-rise height of 11 storeys (36 metres).

2. Minimum Building Height
All new buildings on the Avenues must achieve a minimum height of 10.5 metres (up to 3 storeys) at the street frontage.

3. Minimum Ground Floor Height
The minimum floor to floor height of the ground floor should be 4.5 metres to facilitate retail uses at grade.

4A. Front Façade: Angular Plane
The building envelope should allow for a minimum of 5-hours of sunlight onto the Avenue sidewalks from March 21st - September 21st.

4B. Front Façade: Pedestrian Perception Step-back
“Pedestrian Perception” step-backs may be required to mitigate the perception of height and create comfortable pedestrian conditions.

4C. Front Façade: Alignment
The front street wall of mid-rise buildings should be built to the front property lines or applicable setback lines.

5A. Rear Transition to Neighbourhoods: Deep
The transition between a deep Avenue property and areas designated Neighbourhoods, Parks and Open Space Areas, and Natural Areas to the rear should be created through setback and angular plane provisions.

5B. Rear Transition to Neighbourhoods: Shallow
The transition between a shallow Avenue property and areas designated Neighbourhoods, Parks and Open Space Areas, and Natural Areas to the rear should be created through alternative setback and angular plane provisions.

5C. Rear Transition to Employment Areas
The transition between an Avenue property and areas designated Employment Areas to the rear should be created through setback and step-back provisions.

5D. Rear Transition to Apartment Neighbourhoods
The transition between an Avenue property and areas designated Apartment Neighbourhoods to the rear should be created through setbacks and other provisions.

6. Corner Sites: Heights & Angular Planes
On corner sites, the front angular plane and heights that apply to the Avenue frontage will also apply to the secondary street frontage.

7A. Minimum Sidewalk Zones
Mid-rise buildings may be required to be set back at grade to provide a minimum sidewalk zone.

7B. Streetscapes
Avenue streetscapes should provide the highest level of urban design treatment to create beautiful pedestrian environments and great places to shop, work and live.

8A. Side Property Line: Continuous Street Walls
Mid-rise buildings should be built to the side property lines.

8B. Side Property Line: Limiting Blank Side Walls
Blank sidewalls should be designed as an architecturally finished surface and large expanses of blank sidewalls should be avoided.

8C. Side Property Line: Step-backs at Upper Storeys
There should be breaks at upper storeys between new and existing mid-rise buildings that provide sky-views and increased sunlight access to the sidewalk. This can be achieved through side step-backs at the upper storeys.

8D. Side Property Line: Existing Side Windows
Existing buildings with side wall windows should not be negatively impacted by new developments.

8E. Side Property Line: Side Street Setbacks
Buildings should be setback along the side streets to provide transition to adjacent residential properties with front yard setbacks.

9. Building Width: Maximum Width

Where mid-rise building frontages are more than 60 metres in width, building façades should be articulated or "broken up" to ensure that façades are not overly long.

10. At-Grade Uses: Residential

Where retail at grade is not required, and residential uses are permitted, the design of ground floors should provide adequate public/private transition, through setbacks and other methods, and allow for future conversion to retail uses.

11. Setbacks for Civic Spaces

In special circumstances where civic or public spaces are desired, additional setbacks may be encouraged.

12. Balconies & Projections

Balconies and other projecting building elements should not negatively impact the public realm or prevent adherence to other Performance Standards.

13. Roofs & Roofscapes

Mechanical penthouses may exceed the maximum height limit by up to 5 metres but may not penetrate any angular planes.

14. Exterior Building Materials

Buildings should utilize high-quality materials selected for their permanence, durability and energy efficiency.

15. Façade Design & Articulation

Mid-rise buildings will be designed to support the public and commercial function of the Avenue through well articulated and appropriately scaled façades.

16A. Vehicular Access

Whenever possible, vehicular access should be provided via local streets and rear lanes, not the Avenue.

16B. Mid-Block Vehicular Access

For mid-block sites without rear lane access, a front driveway may be permitted, provided established criteria are met.

17. Loading & Servicing

Loading, servicing, and other vehicular related functions should not detract from the use or attractiveness of the pedestrian realm.

18. Design Quality

Mid-rise buildings will reflect design excellence and green building innovation, utilizing high-quality materials that acknowledge the public role of the Avenues.

19A. Heritage & Character Areas

All mid-rise buildings on the Avenues should respect and be sensitively integrated with heritage buildings in the context of Heritage Conservation Districts.

19B. Development in a HCD

The character and values of HCDs must be respected to ensure that the district is not diminished by incremental or sweeping change.

19C. Development Adjacent to a Heritage Property

Development adjacent to heritage properties should be sensitive to, and not negatively impact, heritage properties.

19D. Character Area: Fine Grain Fabric

New mid-rise buildings in Character Areas that have a fine grain, main street fabric should be designed to reflect a similar rhythm of entrances and multiple retail units.

19E. Character Area: Consistent Cornice Line

Buildings in a Character Area should maintain a consistent cornice line for the first step-back by establishing a "datum line" or an average of the existing cornice line.

19F. Character Area: Vertical Additions

Additions to existing buildings is an alternative to redevelopment projects on the Avenues, and should be encouraged in areas with an existing urban fabric.

19G. Character Area: Other Considerations

Additional "context sensitive" design and massing guidelines should be considered for development in Character Areas.

Performance Standard #1:
Maximum Allowable Height

The maximum allowable height of buildings on the Avenues will be no taller than the width of the Avenue right-of-way, up to a maximum mid-rise height of 11 storeys (36 metres).

- Using the four prevailing right-of-way widths: 20, 27, 30, & 36 metres.
- The maximum height may only be achieved if the built form demonstrates compliance with all applicable Performance Standards.
- Not all sites on the Avenues will be able to achieve the maximum height. The dimensions of the development lot – particularly lot depth – impact the ability of a given site to be built to its maximum height.

Achieving the maximum building heights will be dictated by the required angular planes set out in subsequent Performance Standards.

Rationale

The City has generally defined mid-rise buildings as being "taller than a typical house or townhouse but no taller than the width of the street's public right-of-way". For example, on a street with a 20 metre right-of-way, a mid-rise building consisting of commercial uses at grade and residential uses above, can be up to 20 metres in height, or 6 storeys.

Official Plan Map 3 - Right-of-Way Widths Associated with Existing Major Streets, identifies Avenues with seven different right-of-ways (R.O.W.) widths: 20, 23, 27, 30, 33, 36, and 45 metres. There are four widths - 20, 27, 30 and 36 metres that prevail. In instances where the right-of-way width is 23 and 33 metres, Performance Standards for mid-rise buildings will apply, permitting maximum building heights are the same as the R.O.W.

Eglinton Avenue West is the only Avenue that has a 45 metre wide R.O.W. As the maximum mid-rise height is defined as 11 storeys, or approximately, 36 metres, the City should undertake further study of this area to determine appropriate building heights.

The *Design Criteria for Review of Tall Building Proposals* defines tall buildings as those which are taller than the right-of-way they are located on. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed a mid-rise building is never taller than 11 storeys or 36 metres high (equal to the width of the widest prevailing right-of-way found on the Avenues).

Table 5

R.O.W. Width[1]	Mixed-Use		Commercial	
	storeys	height (m)[2]	storeys	height (m)[3]
20m	6	19.5	5	18.9
27m	8	25.5	7	26.1
30m	9	28.5	8	29.7
36m	11	34.5	9	33.3

Assumptions

1 - R.O.W. widths as identified in Official Plan Map 3

2 - Mixed Use heights assume 4.5m for ground floor and 3.0m for all floors above

3 - Commercial heights assume 4.5m for ground floor and 3.6m for all floors above

The former City of Toronto's Main Streets By-law (By-law 1994-0178) was created after a study of existing context along Toronto's main streets as well as extensive public consultation. The resulting By-law created a building envelope within the 4 to 6 storey range. However, the City has seen very little "uptake" based on this zoning and today there are still very few buildings in this height range along the former City's main streets.

The creation of a context-appropriate height regime might encourage land owners to consider the mid-rise building as a feasible typology for development.

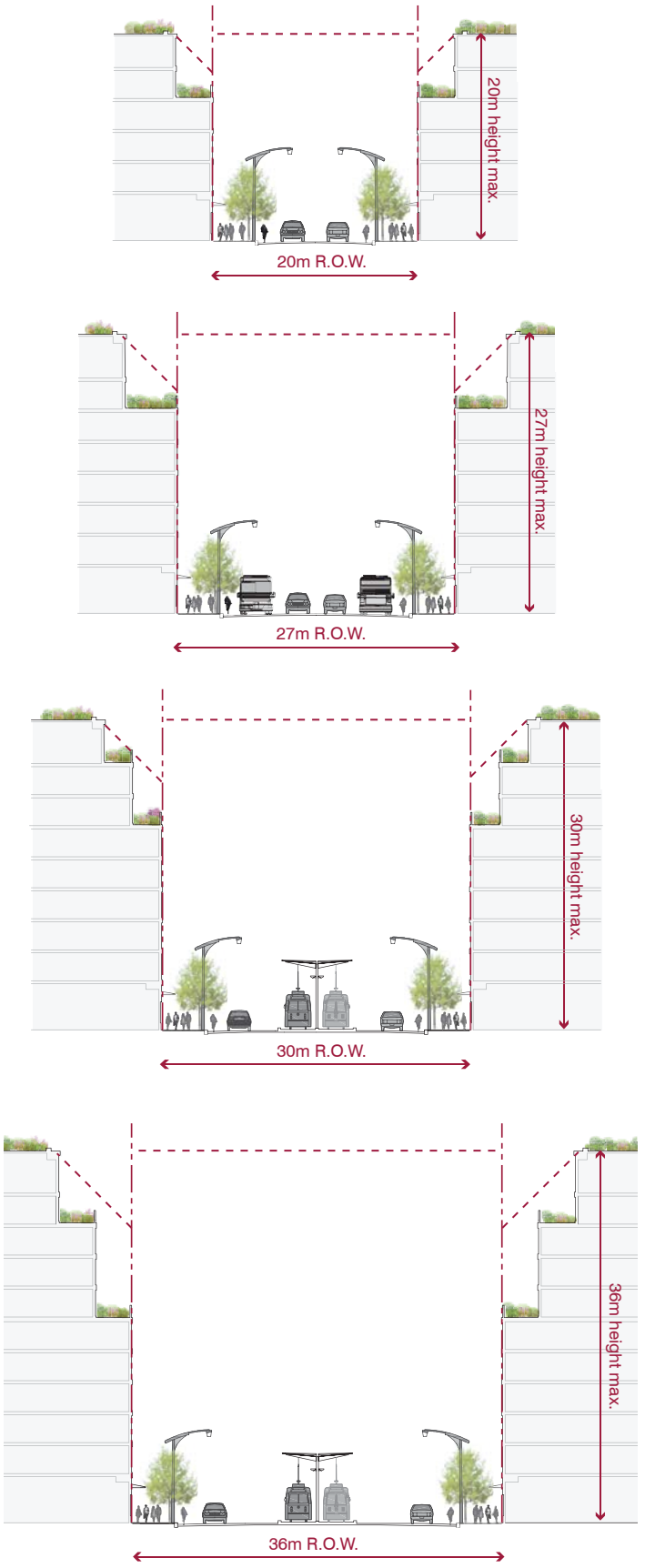
Sites that are constrained by size or context and cannot meet the Performance Standards for front, side and rear transitions (Performance Standards 4, 5, and the 7) **will generally not be permitted to develop at the maximum height**. The maximum allowable height defined in this Performance Standard is the determining factor for height maximums and supersedes other angular plane restrictions which could potentially be more permissive.

This study recognizes that building height is only one aspect of regulating building design. Imperative to the success of the Avenues is the ability of mid-rise buildings to fit into a variety of existing contexts and contribute positively to the overall character of the Avenues. Subsequent Performance Standards outline additional methods to shape and design mid-rise buildings.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form

Policies: 1, 3 a), and 4

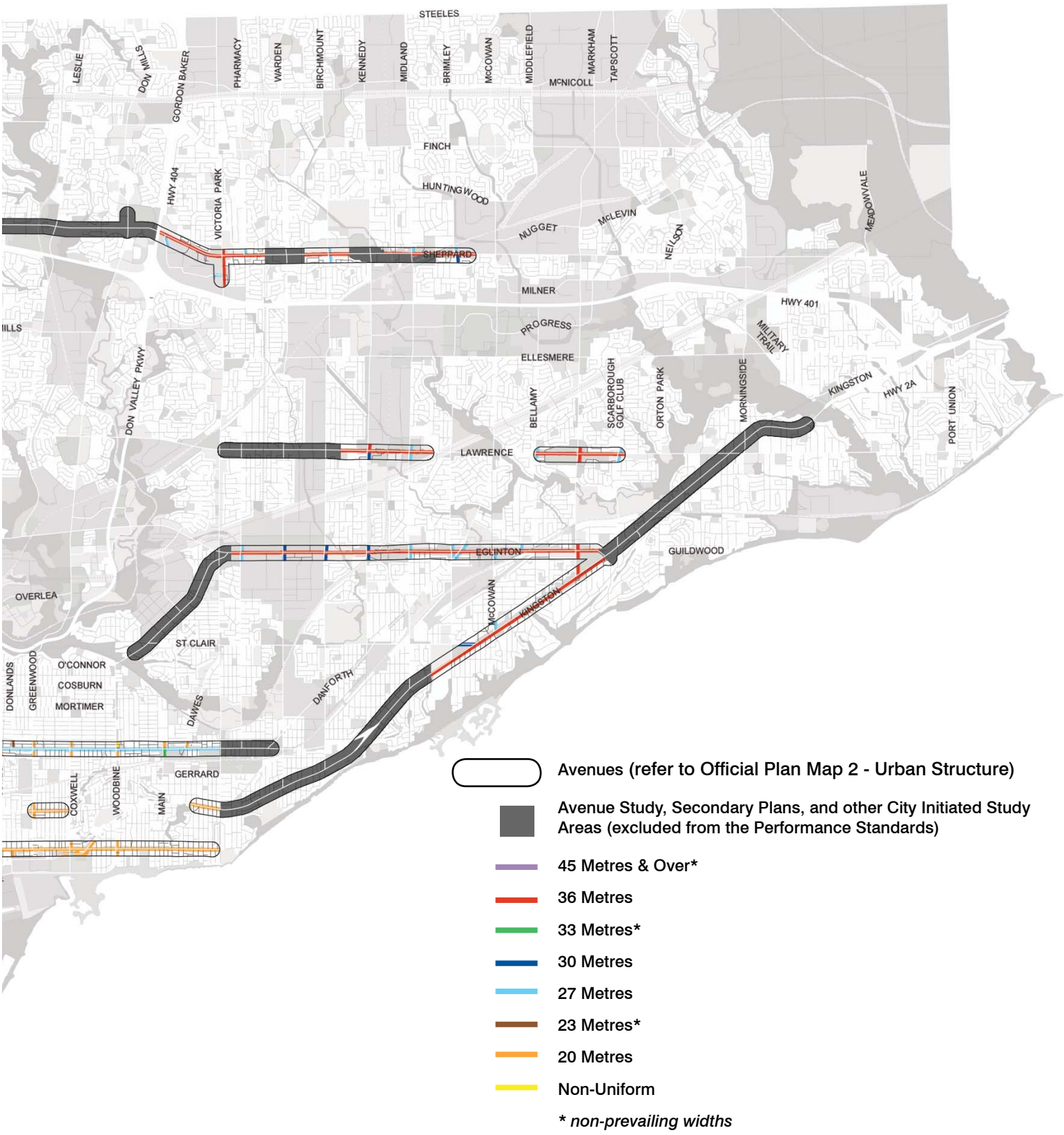


Maximum allowable height is determined by the width of the right-of-way (Note, in some cases, where sidewalk width is not sufficient, front setbacks from the property line will be necessary. This will not affect the overall height or angular plane provisions applied to the building).

Map 6: Avenues & R.O.W. Widths

Not to Scale

Map should be referred to in colour



According to Official Plan Map 3 - Right-of-Way Widths Associated with Existing Major Streets, the Avenue right-of-ways fall into one of seven widths: 20, 23, 27, 30, 33, 36, and 45 metres. There are four widths - 20, 27, 30 and 36 metres that prevail. In instances where the right-of-way width is 23 and 33 metres, maximum building heights should not exceed the R.O.W. width. The 45 metre wide R.O.W. along Eglinton Avenue West should be considered for area-specific study.

Performance Standard #2:
Minimum Building Height

All new buildings on the Avenues must achieve a minimum height of 10.5 metres (3 storeys) at the street frontage.

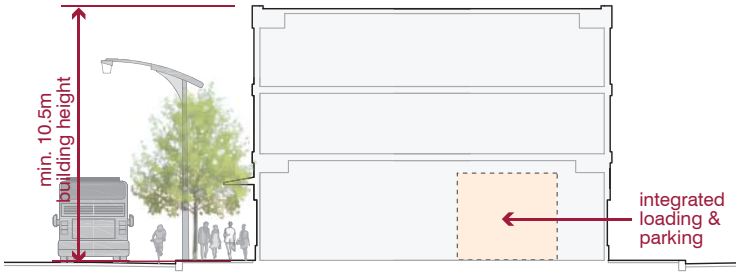
Rationale

The City's strategy to reurbanize the Avenues will strengthen community focal points as well as intensify mixed-uses in appropriate locations. By identifying the Avenues as locations for new residents and jobs, the City can make better use of existing infrastructure and create a more vibrant street life on the Avenues. In order to do this, the inefficient development of sites on the Avenues needs to be prevented through the requirement of a minimum building height on the Avenues. One-storey retail buildings and townhomes are examples of inefficient building typologies.

A minimum height of 10.5 metres will allow for up to three storeys, but different uses may result in one or two storey buildings.

The minimum building height also supports the objective to create a pedestrian environment through street walls that are generally consistent along the Avenues, as well as achieving a minimum density along the Avenues to support improved public transit.

Example of a 3 storey building.



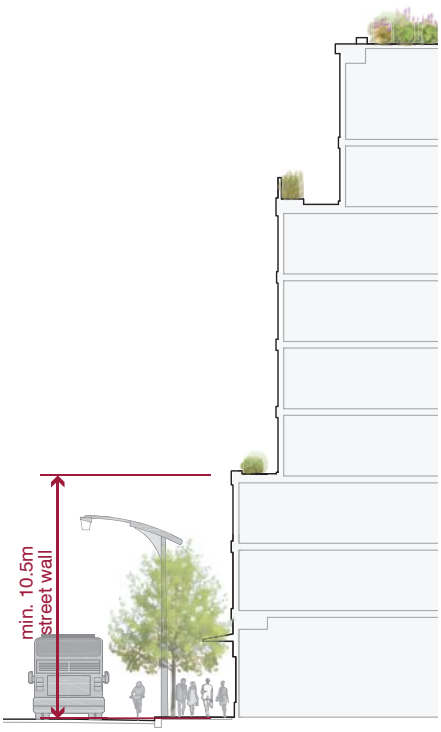
Examples of minimum total building height of 3 storeys.

Official Plan Reference

2.2 Structuring Growth in the City: Integrating Land Use and Transportation
Policies: 2 a), 2 b), and 2 d)

2.2.3 Avenues: Reurbanizing Arterial Corridors
Policies: 2 b) i), and 2 b) v) (1)

Example of a 3 storey street wall.



Examples of minimum street wall height of 3 storeys.

Performance Standard #3:
Minimum Ground Floor Height

The minimum floor-to-floor height of the ground floor should be 4.5 metres to facilitate retail uses at grade.

- Ground floor heights should be a minimum of 4.5 metres (floor to floor, measured from average grade) to accommodate retail uses and provide sufficient clearance for loading areas. Where residential uses front onto Avenues at grade level, the vertical distance from grade to the top of the second storey floor level should also measure 4.5 metres.

Rationale

Floor heights for commercial uses are generally higher than a typical residential floor. A taller floor-to-floor height at grade will provide for flexibility of grade level uses and increase the marketability of retail spaces. A floor-to-floor height of 4.5 metres has been cited as the desirable height to achieve this. A taller floor-to-floor height at the street level also emphasizes this portion of the building and thereby increases the visibility of any developed retail.

A floor-to-floor height of 4.5 metres provides clearance for loading spaces and trucks into internal spaces of a building (i.e. would not require double height garage door openings), which should be met at the rear of the site.

A 4.5 metre floor-to-floor height is also required for at-grade residential uses fronting onto an Avenue. For residential uses, the 4.5 metres height would be taken from exterior grade to the top of the second storey floor level. See Performance Standard 10 for a description of design measures for residential at grade.

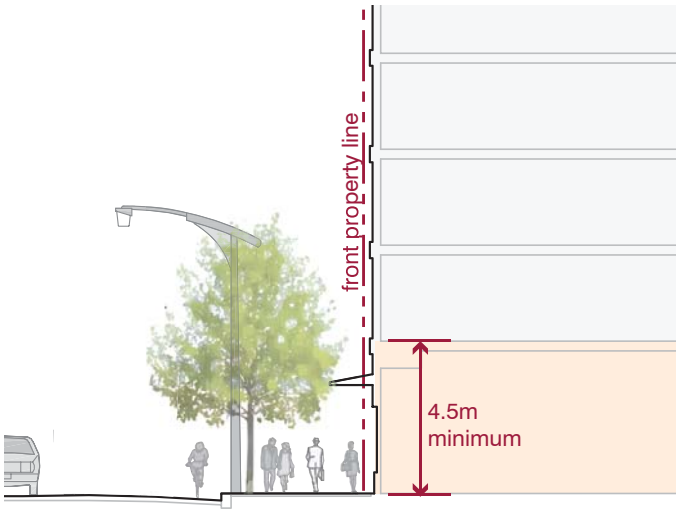
As the Avenues mature, residential uses at grade may be converted to retail uses. The 4.5 metre height considered with a horizontal setback required for residential uses (see Performance Standard 10), provides an infill zone that can accommodate this transition.

Official Plan Reference

2.2 Structuring Growth in the City: Integrating Land Use and Transportation

Policies: 2 c)

3.5.2 The Future of Retailing



Example of minimum ground floor height for commercial-retail uses.

Example of tall ground floors for flexible commercial space.

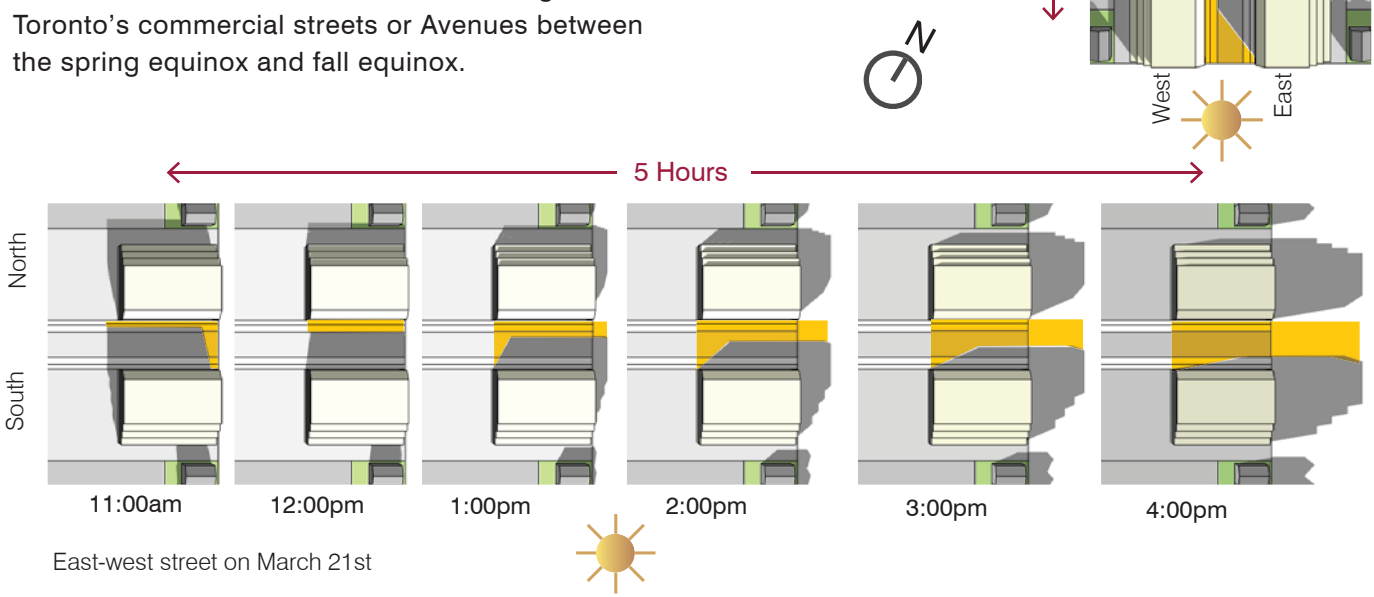
Performance Standard #4A:
Front Façade: Angular Plane

The building envelope should allow for a minimum of 5-hours of sunlight onto the Avenue sidewalks from March 21st - September 21st.

Rationale

The success of the Avenues is contingent on the ability to create great main streets with comfortable, attractive public spaces, especially sidewalks. The Official Plan reiterates this notion, stating that “Great cities are judged by the look and quality of their squares, parks, streets and public spaces and the buildings which frame and define them.”

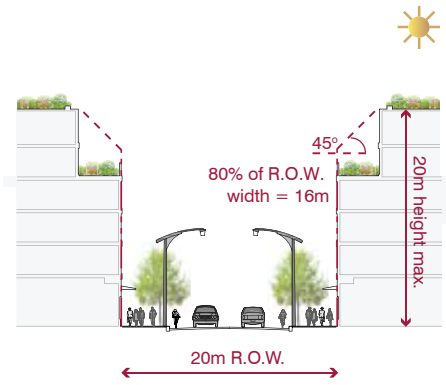
Extensive research about the effects of sunlight on Toronto’s sidewalks was compiled in the “Sun, Wind, and Pedestrian Comfort: A Study of Toronto’s Central Area” by Bosselman et al., 1990. Key recommendations of this study support the objective to maintain a minimum of 5-hours of sunlight on Toronto’s commercial streets or Avenues between the spring equinox and fall equinox.

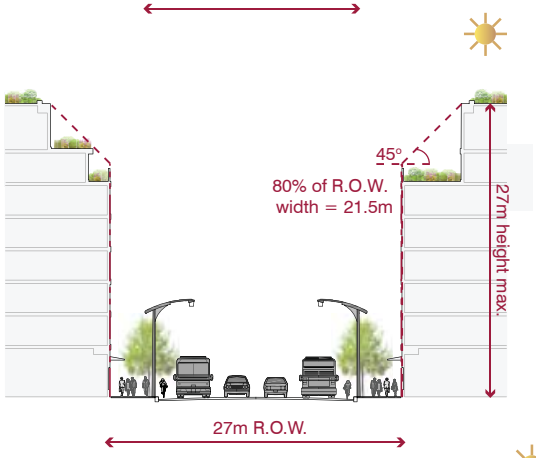


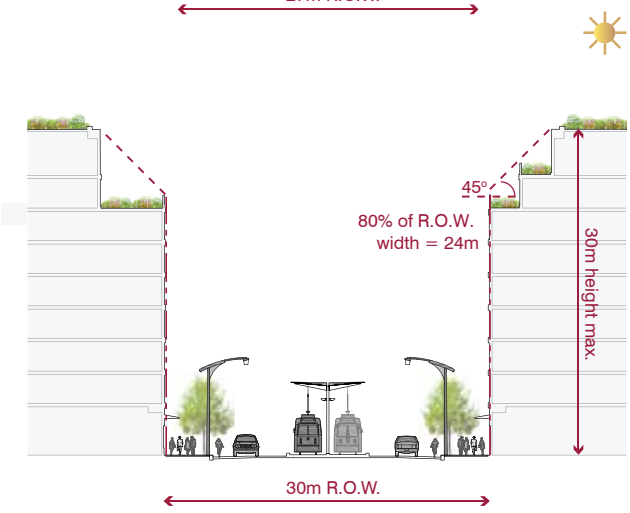
This Performance Standard results in a building envelope that allows for 5-hours of sunlight access on the opposite sidewalk as well as ensuring that the street wall height is in proportion with the R.O.W. An angular plane will be taken from a height equivalent to 80% of the R.O.W. width and subsequent storeys must fit within a 45-degree angular plane from this point. The minimum street wall height is 10.5 metres as per Performance Standard 2.

Given that there may be buildings as high as the right-of-way width, the upper storeys of buildings will need to be massed to provide sunlight on the opposite sidewalk. Buildings built to the front property line and to the maximum allowable height will need to step-back to fit within this angular plane.

The recommendations of this Performance Standard should also apply to diagonal streets, buildings that are set back from the property line, and streets that have a grade difference from one side of the R.O.W. to the other, in order to achieve consistency of built form along the Avenues, even though the five hours of sunlight may be achieved through different tools.



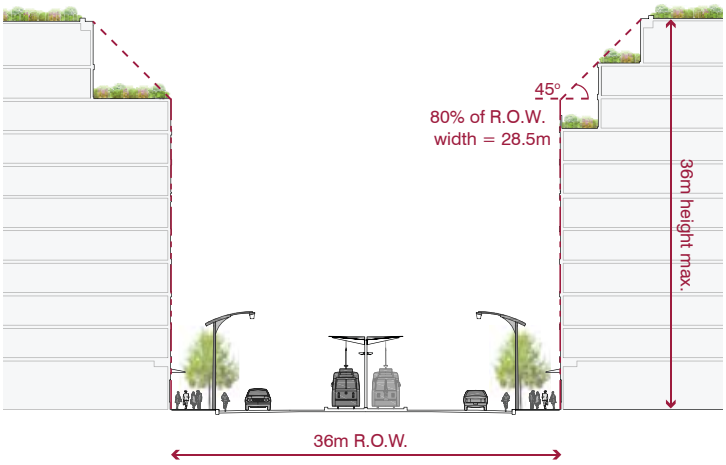




Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form
Policies: 3 c), 3 d), and 3 e)

4.5 Mixed Use Areas
Policies: 2 e)



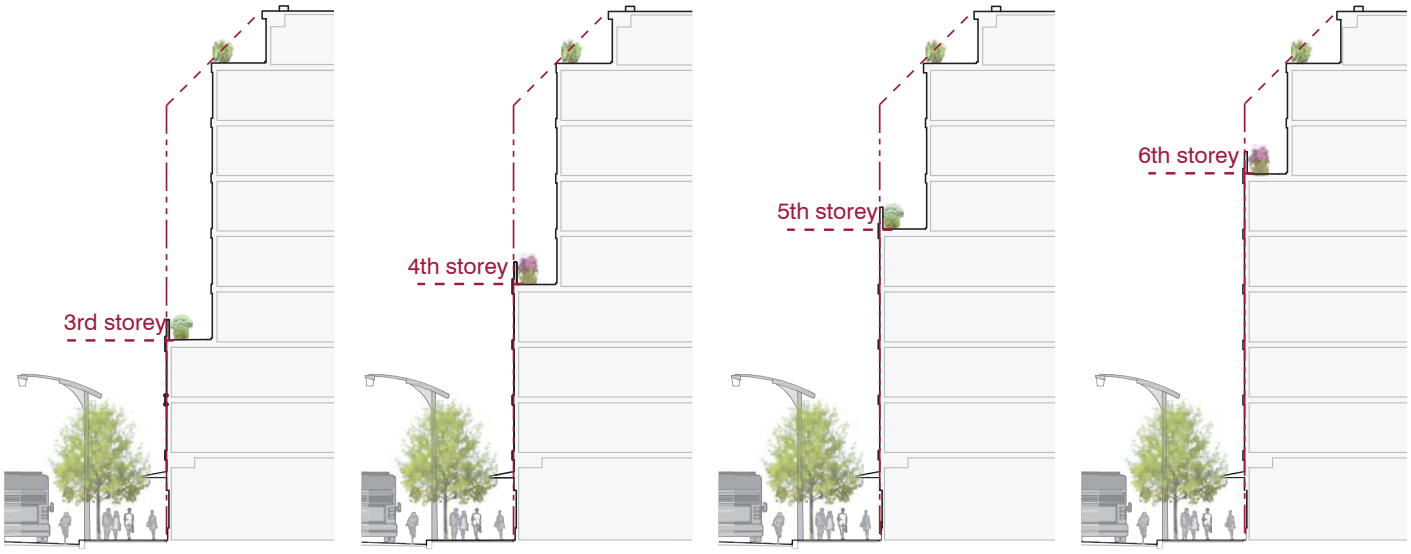
Performance Standard #4B:
Front Façade: Pedestrian Perception Step-back

"Pedestrian Perception" step-backs on buildings taller than 23 metres should be required to mitigate the perception of height and create buildings at the street that are of a comfortable scale for pedestrians.

Rationale

The provisions of Performance Standard 4A will generally result in a step-back of the upper floors of mid-rise buildings. An additional step-back may be appropriate for buildings taller than 7 storeys in height as a means of mitigating the perception of height on the Avenue. The ideal location of this additional "Pedestrian Perception" step-back is not prescribed and should be determined as part of the design process.

Front step-backs articulate building massing, reduce shadow impacts within the public realm, and help to mitigate the pedestrian's perception of height. The minimum step-back dimension is 1.5 metres.



For buildings taller than 23 metres, an additional step-back may be required. The location of this step-back is flexible. The above example illustrates a 9 storey building on a 30 metre R.O.W. which integrates step-backs in accordance with Performance Standard 4A: Front Façade: Angular Plan and an additional Pedestrian Perception step-back.

Buildings on a 20 and 23 metre right-of-way are not required to meet this Guideline. For R.O.W.s, larger than 23 metres, an additional Pedestrian Perception step-back should be considered between the third floor and the 80% height of the façade.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form

Policies: 4

Visualization of front step-backs on a 30 metre wide R.O.W.

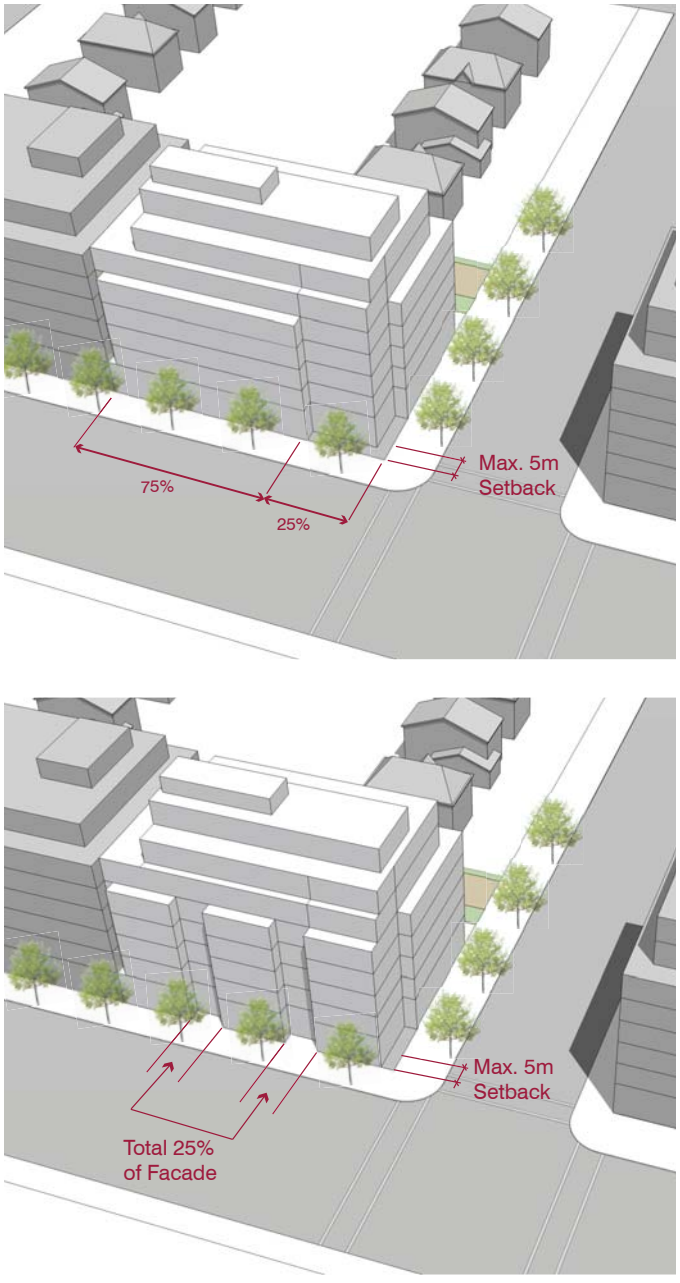
Performance Standard #4C:
Front Façade: Alignment

The front street wall of mid-rise buildings should be built to the front property lines or applicable setback lines.

- The street wall is defined as the portion of a buildings façade comprised of the building base (minimum of 10.5 metres or 3 storeys in height and up to the 80% of the permitted maximum building height).
- A building should have a minimum of 75% of its frontage built to the setback line (see Performance Standard 7A) for the first 3 storeys at a minimum.
- The remaining 25% may setback an additional distance up to a maximum of 5 metres to provide a deeper area for lobby entrances, bike parking or outdoor marketing areas such as café seating (for residential uses at-grade see Performance Standard 10).

Rationale

The ground floors of buildings are generally required to provide retail fronting onto the Avenue. Mid-rise buildings should be built to the setback line (as identified in Performance Standard 7A) so that they create a continuous street wall with direct connections between grade-related commercial and community uses and the public realm. This relationship of sidewalk to grade-related uses "encourages diverse economic stimulation and social interaction at a pedestrian scale." (City's Vibrant Streets Manual, p. 26).



The front façade build-to requirement may allow for some flexibility in design.

Additional setbacks may be desirable for a portion of the building frontage to accommodate an outdoor marketing zone, building entrances, and café and restaurant terraces - for a maximum of 25% of the façade width.

Balconies and below-grade parking structures may not protrude into the public realm, but may extend as far as the front property line, or the front setback line.

Where ground floor residential uses are permitted, special setback provisions apply (see Performance Standard 10).

Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form

Policies: 1 a) and 3 a)

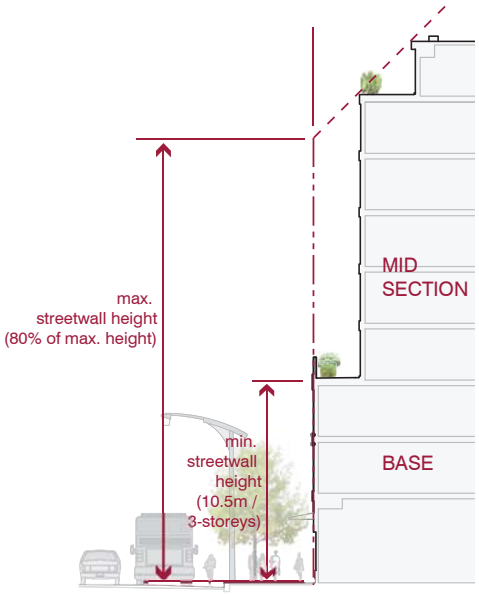
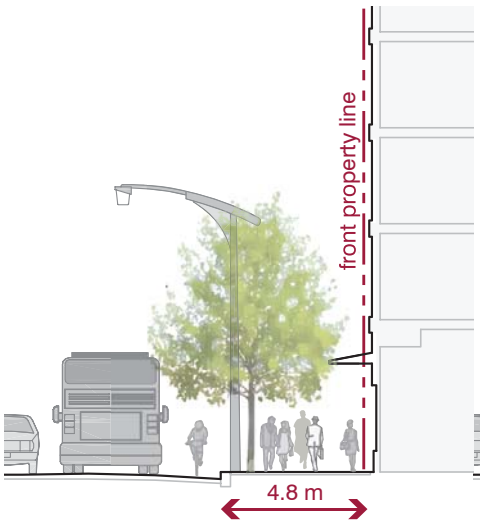
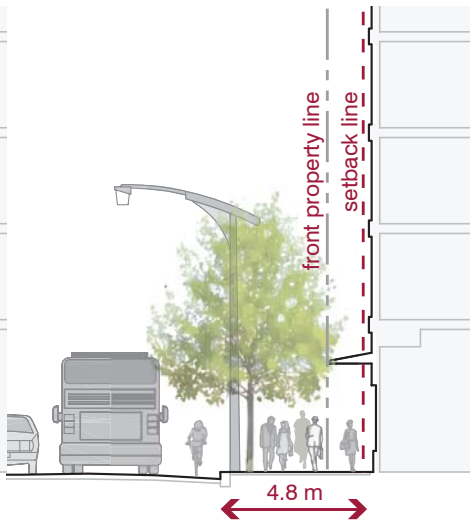


Diagram identifying the street wall



Example of property 'build-to' line.



Example of setback 'build-to' line.

Performance Standard #5A:
Rear Transition to Neighbourhoods: Deep Properties

The transition between a deep Avenue property and areas designated Neighbourhoods, Parks and Open Space Areas, and Natural Areas to the rear should be created through setback & angular plane provisions.

- The transition for deep properties abutting Neighbourhoods and all properties abutting Parks and Open Space Areas, and Natural Areas will include a minimum setback of 7.5 metres to the building face and a 45-degree angular plane from the property line to a maximum height of 1:1. This provides a lower building at the rear and a gradual transition from the rear property line.
- Where a public laneway abuts a site, the laneway may be included for the purposes of establishing the setback and angular plane.
- In order to minimize overlook, principal windows should not be located closer than 10 metres from the rear property line and balconies should not be below 10.5 metres from grade from the rear property line.

Rationale

The City's Official Plan policies are explicit in their intent to protect Toronto's Neighbourhoods, Parks and Open Space Areas, and Natural Areas. Any new guidelines or policies should continue to create an appropriate transition between the Avenues and adjacent residential communities and parks, which the rear transition Performance Standards provide for.

The Performance Standards recognize the variation in physical property dimensions across the City's Avenues. There are shallow properties on some Avenues and deep properties on others. Table 6 (on the opposite page), outlines the definition of deep lots according to maximum height and R.O.W. width for the four prevailing right-of-way widths on the Avenues. These also consider the dimensions required to efficiently provide parking in below grade structures.

The 7.5 metre setback allows for a two-way lane (6.0 metres), and a walkway (1.5 metres) or landscape buffer (1.5 metres). In the instance where a property abuts a public lane, the lane may be included within the 7.5 metre setback calculation. This setback encourages improvement to existing lanes and the creation of a continuous rear lane system where none currently exists. Setbacks in excess of 7.5 metres may be appropriate in areas where a greater landscape buffer is necessary.

In order to respond to the variety of property depths, lots equal to, or less than, the minimum depth (by right-of-way width) will be considered shallow properties, and those with a depth greater than the depth identified in Table 6 will be considered deep properties.

Very deep sites, identified as sites that are so large they require new streets and blocks, have so far been treated differently in both Avenue Studies and through approved applications. The City should consider these sites on a case-by-case basis or should identify these sites as priorities for future Avenue Studies. See Section 4.5.7 for further detail.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form

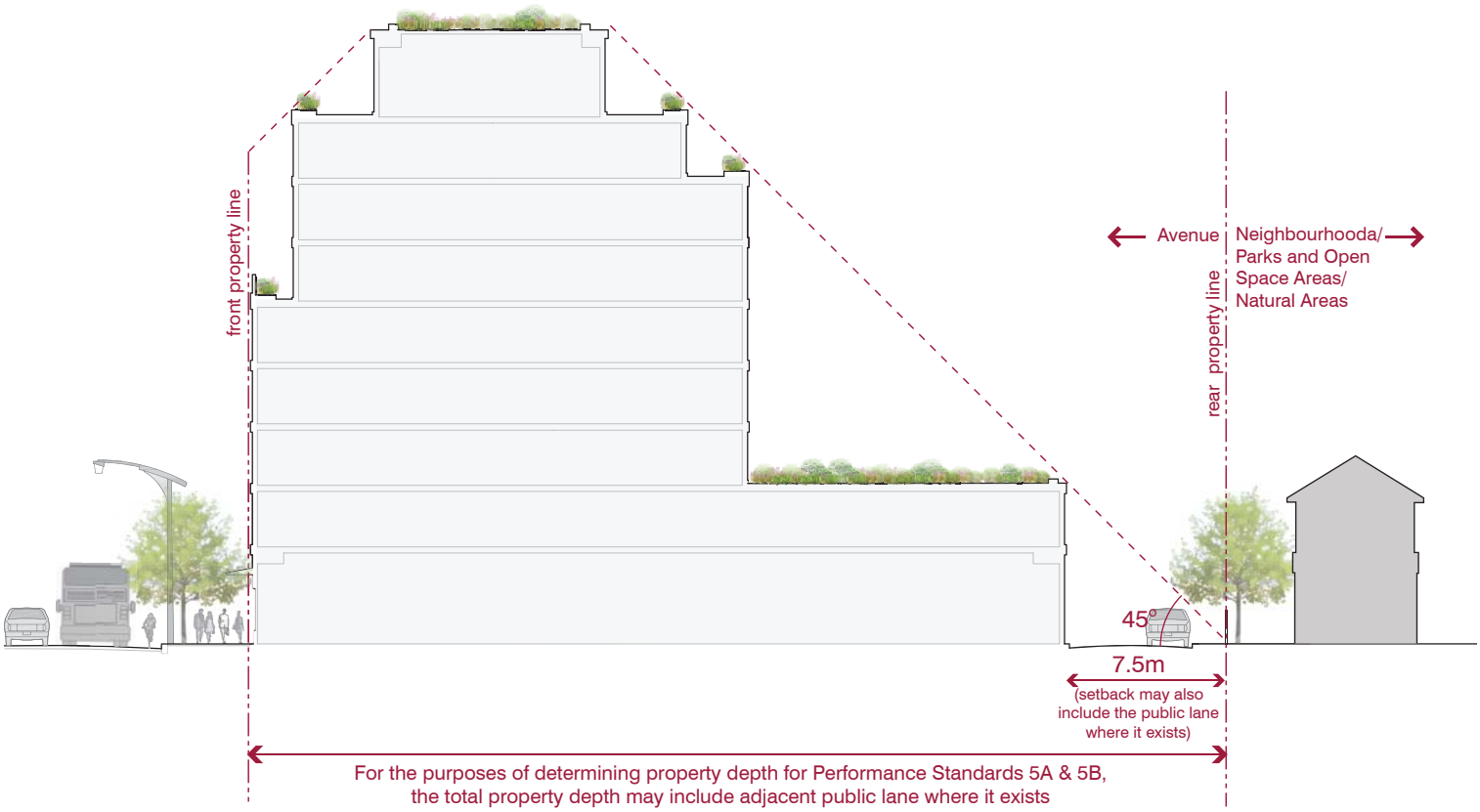
Policies: 3 a), 3 b), 3 c), and 3 d)

4.5 Mixed Use Areas

Policies: 2 c) and 2 d)

Table 6

R.O.W. Width	Definition of Deep Lot is greater than
20m	32.6m
27m	41.0m
30m	44.6m
36m	51.8m



Illustrating the rear transition for deep properties abutting Neighbourhoods, Parks and Open Space Areas and Natural Areas (30 metre R.O.W.).

Performance Standard #5B:
Rear Transition to Neighbourhoods: Shallow Properties

The transition between a shallow Avenue property and areas designated Neighbourhoods, Parks and Open Space Areas, and Natural Areas to the rear should be created through alternative setback & angular plane provisions.

- The transition for shallow properties abutting Neighbourhoods and Parks and Open Space Areas, and Natural Areas will include a minimum setback of 7.5 metres from the property line and a 45-degree angular plane from a height of 10.5 metres above the 7.5 metre setback line to a maximum height of 1:1. This provides a lower building at the rear and a gradual transition from the rear property line.
- Where a public laneway abuts a site, the laneway may be included for the purposes of establishing the setback and angular plane.
- In order to minimize overlook, principal windows should not be located closer than 10 metres from the rear property line and balconies should not be below 10.5 metres from grade from the rear property line.

Rationale

This Study proposes that alternative regulations for rear transitions adjacent to areas designated as Neighbourhoods and Parks and Open Spaces Areas, and Natural Areas be adopted for shallow properties on the City's Avenues. This Performance Standard is similar to 5A, but in this instance the angular plane is taken from a height of 10.5 metre at the 7.5 metre setback.

This Performance Standard is proposed for shallow properties because it is slightly more permissive than other existing rear transition regulations across the City. This Performance Standard only applies to properties that are equal to, or less than those indicated on Table 7.

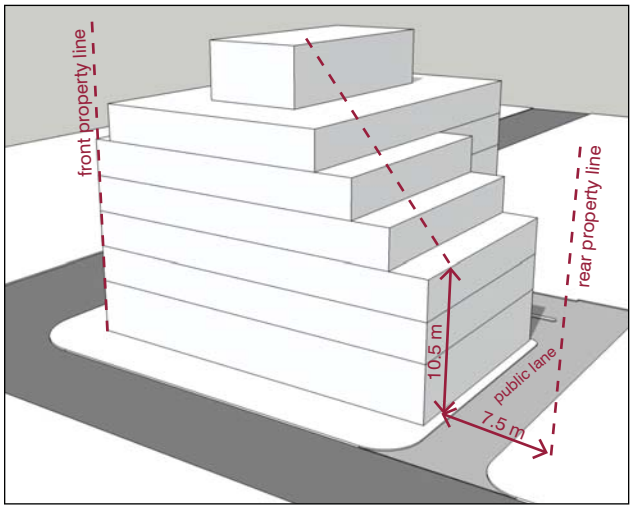
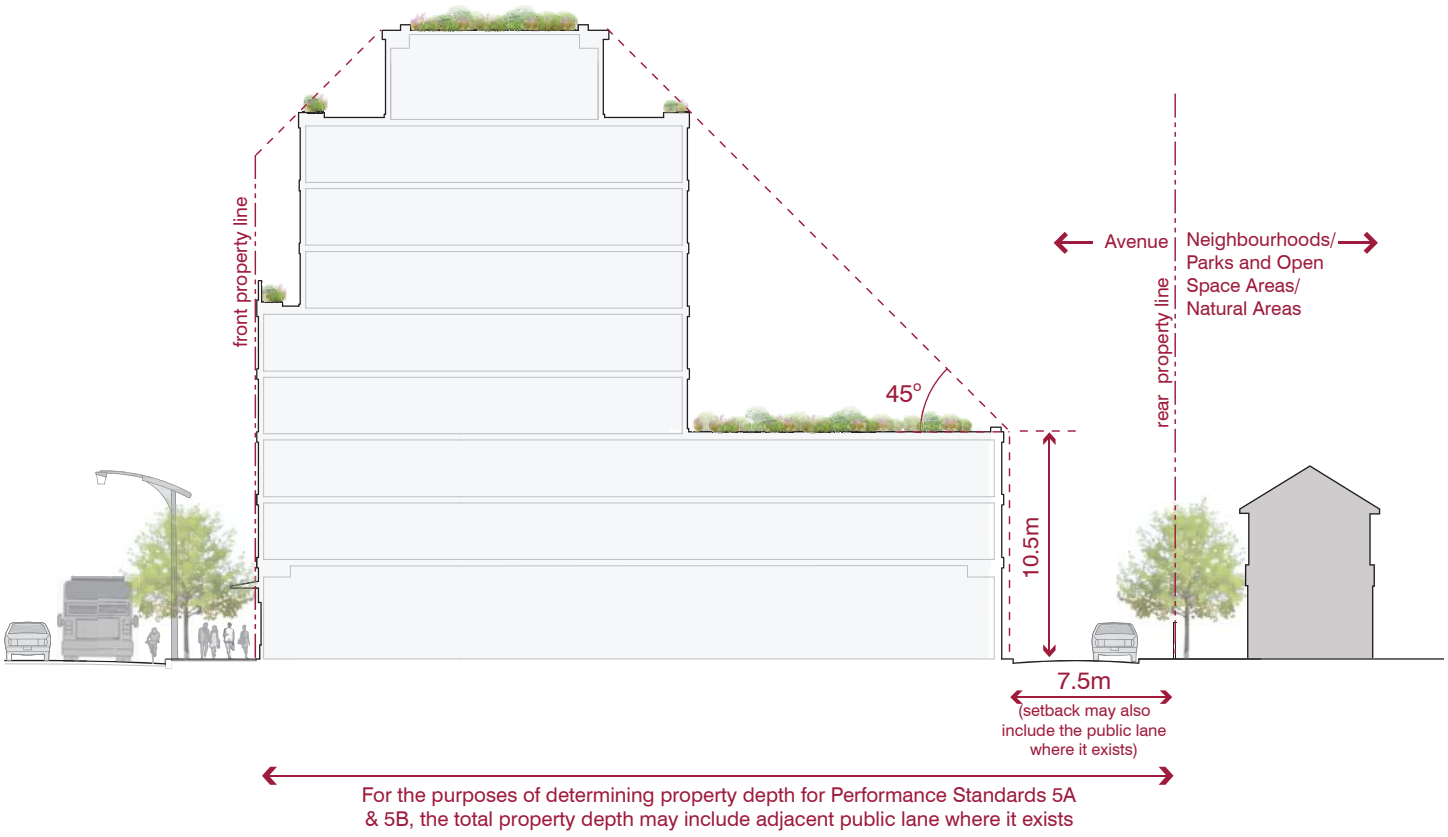


Table 7

R.O.W. Width	Definition of Shallow Lot is
	equal to or less than
20m	32.6m
27m	41.0m
30m	44.6m
36m	51.8m



Illustrating the alternative transition for shallow properties abutting Neighbourhoods, Parks and Open Space Areas, and Natural Areas (30 metre R.O.W.).

Performance Standard #5B (cont'd):
Rear Transition to Neighbourhoods: Shallow Properties

Considerations for Enhancement Zones

An additional provision for shallow lots could include the creation of an Enhancement Zone which would allow development on shallow Avenue properties to achieve mid-rise development permissions. Enhancement Zones are identified parcels of land containing a single detached home or two adjacent parcels of land containing two adjacent and attached semi-detached dwellings (see illustration on page 57). The Enhancement Zone concept was developed as part of the St. Clair Avenue Study (Bathurst Street to Keele Street) after City staff conducted a comprehensive detailed block-by-block and lot-by-lot analysis of the area. It was implemented through a City-initiated Official Plan Amendment which set the parameters for its application. If used, the Enhancement Zones identified for St. Clair Avenue West would be free of any buildings or structures and would act as a buffer between the rear of an Avenue development and the side yard of a residential property.

From a development perspective, the Enhancement Zone would help facilitate and provide the opportunity for parcels fronting on the Avenues to reach the maximum allowable heights identified in Performance Standard 1 while meeting rear angular plane and rear setback requirements. The City has undertaken a preliminary property depth analysis on the Avenues that identifies a number of properties on the Avenues that do not have the sufficient lot depth to accommodate the maximum allowable heights determined by the right-of-way width. These identified properties may not meet other requirements such as a 6.0 metre laneway or driveway, sufficient space for servicing, underground parking and other technical considerations. The Enhancement Zone is only one solution to developing mid-rise buildings on shallow properties and may not be applicable is all circumstances.

The "Enhancement Zone" was a unique solution that addressed a series of issues limiting development on shallow properties on St. Clair Avenue West. Subsequent consideration of "Enhancement Zones" should only be considered after a comprehensive City-initiated Study has been conducted that addresses the following rationale and characteristics:

Rationale

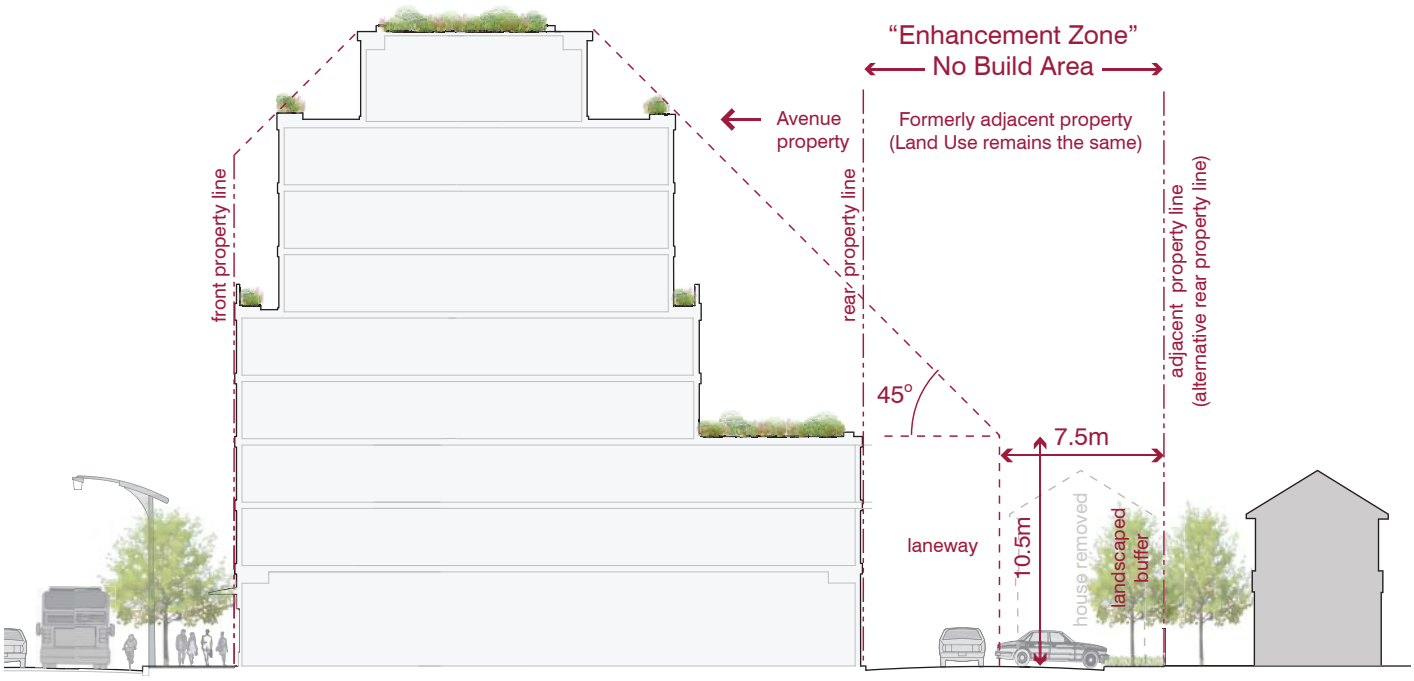
- Without the consideration of Enhancement Zones a mid-rise building could not be achieved (i.e. lot depth is generally less than 30 metres).
- The introduction of Enhancement Zones will result in a mid-rise building where all the Performance Standards can be successfully achieved (i.e. widened sidewalks, heights, building setbacks, etc).
- The Enhancement Zone would create a logical rear lane system, extend or widen an existing laneway, or provide sufficient space for a private driveway to the rear of Avenue properties.

Characteristics

- A maximum of one residential property (or one pair of semi-detached houses) may be considered to provide the depth required to achieve the Enhancement Zone.
- The residential building or property to be used as an Enhancement Zone must be perpendicular to the Avenue property.
- New buildings must be set back for sidewalk widening (see Performance Standard 7) or to accommodate Transit City routes.
- An laneway system currently exists and would remain in place (preventing new mid-rise buildings from encroaching into the Neighbourhood).

- The setback and angular planes (from Performance Standard 5B) would be taken from the edge of the Enhancement Zone (adjacent property line); but would still be a “no-build” zone (permitting only a lane, parking and landscaping).
- The introduction of Enhancement Zones may be applied to the majority of the blocks along the Avenue segment.
- The residential properties within an Enhancement Zone should be part of a uniform lot pattern within the block and would not result in erratic lot configurations.

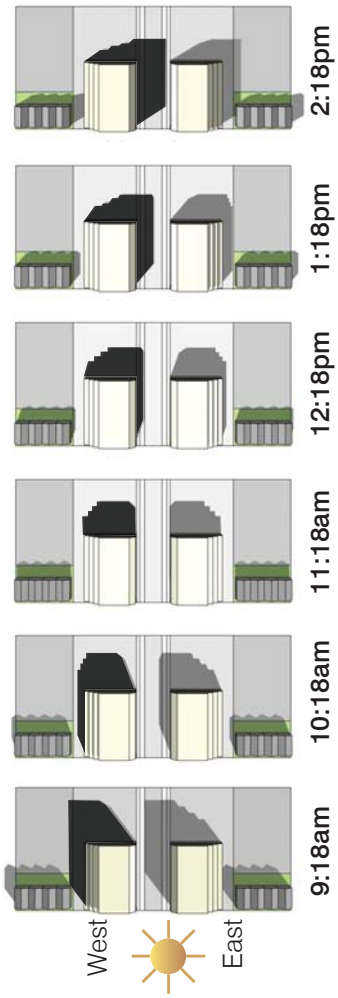
The creation of Enhancement Zones will require an Official Plan Amendment and should only be recommended by the City once a comprehensive, City-initiated area-specific study that includes public consultation has been completed. An Enhancement Zone should only be considered as part of an area-specific solution to the development of shallow lots along an Avenue and not as an individual site-specific solution.



Illustrating the St. Clair Avenue “Enhancement Zone” transition for properties abutting Neighbourhoods or Parks and Open Space Areas (30 metre R.O.W.).

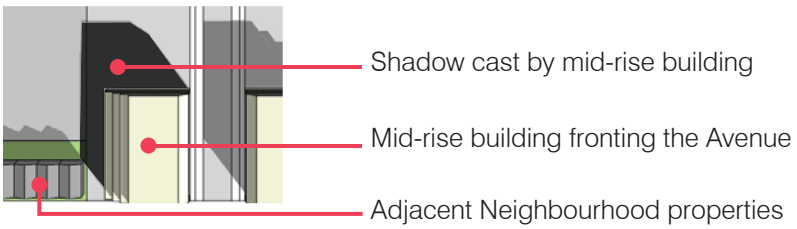
Performance Standards #5A & 5B (cont'd):
Shadow Testing

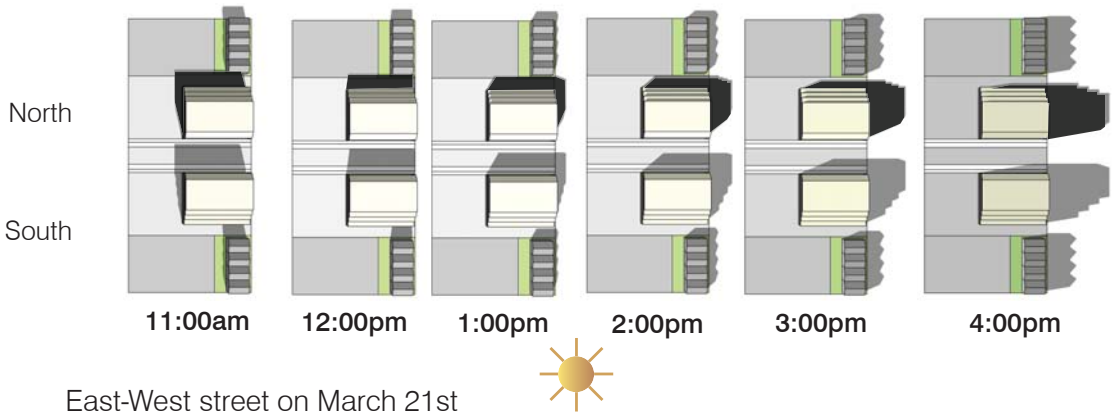
The angular plane provisions in Performance Standards 5A and 5B result in minimal shadow impacts on neighbourhood properties located behind an Avenue's mid-rise building.



North-South street on September 21st

Shadow Testing of Performance Standard 5B (angular plane from 10.5 metres above setback)



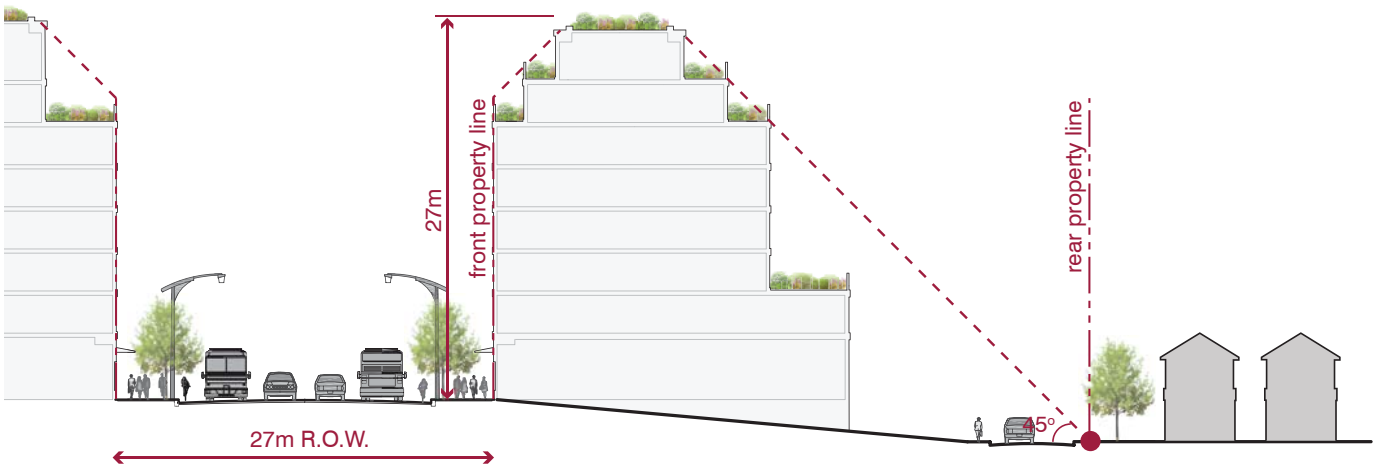


East-West street on March 21st

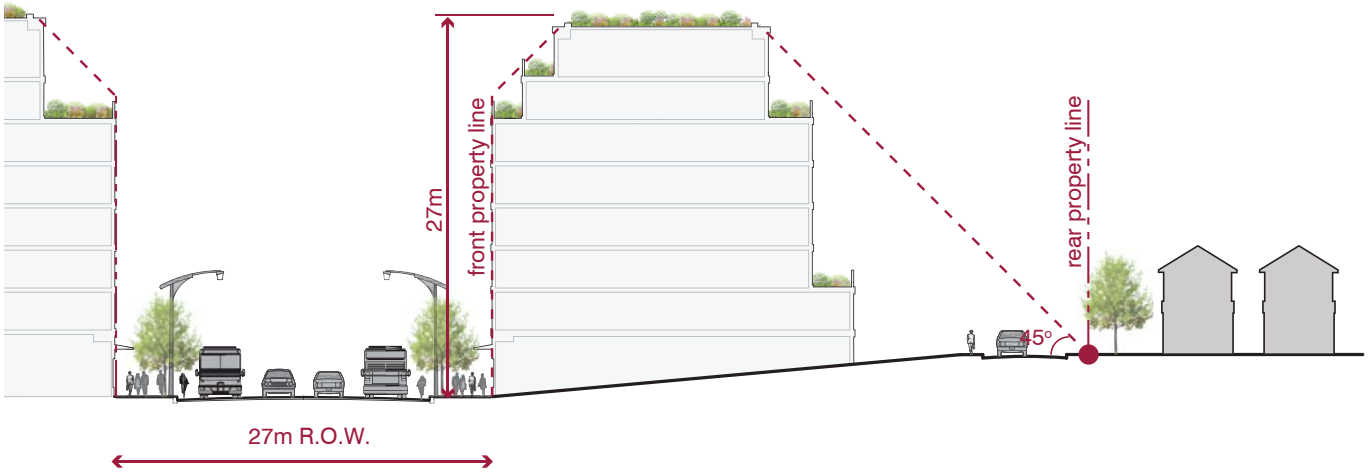
Shadow Testing of Performance Standard 5B (angular plane from 10.5 metres above setback)

Angular Plane Location

In situations where the rear of the property is at a different grade level than the Avenue frontages, the rear angular plane should always be taken from the lowest grade elevation of the adjacent property located along the rear of the mid-rise building's property line. This will ensure that properties to the rear are not subject to additional shadow impacts resulting from changes in grade, or creating potential for taller buildings adjacent to these shared property lines.



Where the rear property line is lower than the Avenue frontage.



Where the rear property line is higher than the Avenue frontage.

Performance Standard #5C:
Rear Transition to Employment Areas

The transition between an Avenue property in a Mixed Use Area and areas designated Employment Areas to the rear should be created through setback & step-back provisions.

- **Where a public laneway abuts a site, the laneway may be included for the purposes of establishing step-backs and setbacks.**

Rationale

The setback and angular plane provisions in both Performance Standards 5A and 5B protect abutting Neighbourhoods and Parks and Open Space Areas and provide for privacy, sunlight, sky-views and space for a rear lane.

The need for privacy, sunlight and sky-view are not as stringent for abutting Employment Areas. Typically, there is no usable outdoor space associated with these types of uses, therefore angular planes are not as necessary. The transition and distance for the taller portions of buildings is not required because privacy is not an issue.

This transition includes a minimum setback of 7.5 metres from the property line to the building face to allow for a rear lane. At the setback line, the building height is permitted up to 13.5 metres (or approximately four storeys). All floors above the 13.5 metre height must step back an additional 2.5 metres. This equates to a total setback of 10 metres from the property line above a 13.5 metre height.

In addition to the Performance Standard outlined here, applicants should refer to the Ministry of the Environment *Land Use Compatibility Guidelines,* which provide recommendations to ensure that sensitive land uses are appropriately designed, buffered and/or separated from each other to prevent adverse effects. The guidelines supplement the Environmental Projection Act to meet the requirements of PPS 1.7.1 e. The guidelines outline three classes of industrial facilities, and separation distances will depend on the three potential influence areas established.

This Performance Standard only applies to properties designated for residential/mixed-use permissions that abut Employment Areas at the rear.

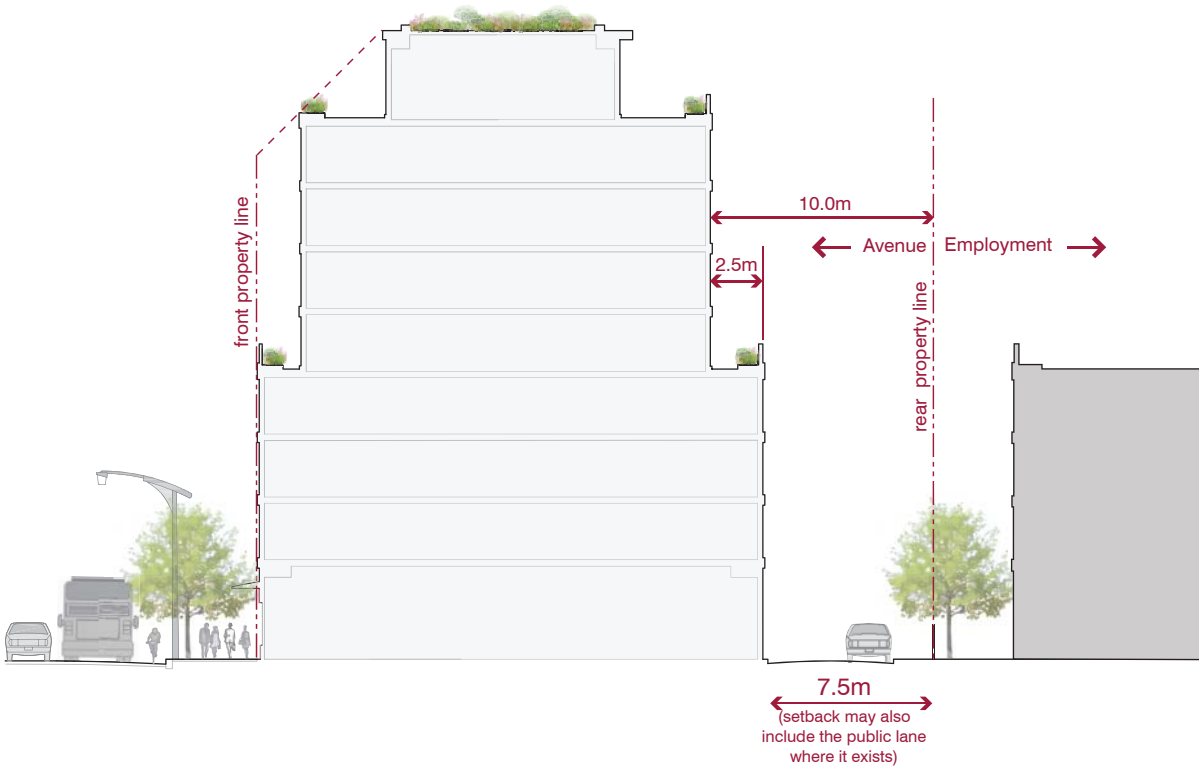
Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form

Policies: 3 a), 3 b), 3 c), and 3 d)

4.5 Mixed Use Areas

Policies: 2 c)



Illustrating the rear transition for properties abutting Employment Areas (30 metre R.O.W.).

Performance Standard #5D:
Rear Transition to Apartment Neighbourhoods

The transition between an Avenue property and areas designated Apartment Neighbourhoods to the rear should be created through separation distances, setbacks and other provisions.

Rationale

There are conditions along the Avenues where an Avenue-fronting property is bounded along the rear by a site or sites with an Apartment Neighbourhood land use designation. There are three general configurations of buildings on these Apartment Neighbourhood sites:

1. Existing Apartment buildings are located parallel to the Avenue's rear property line with a setback that is used as parking or vehicular movement;
2. Existing Apartment buildings are located parallel to the Avenue's rear property line with a setback that is used as open space; or
3. Existing Apartment buildings are perpendicular to the Avenue property with minimal or no windows facing the Avenue property.

In these three configurations, there are three main considerations:

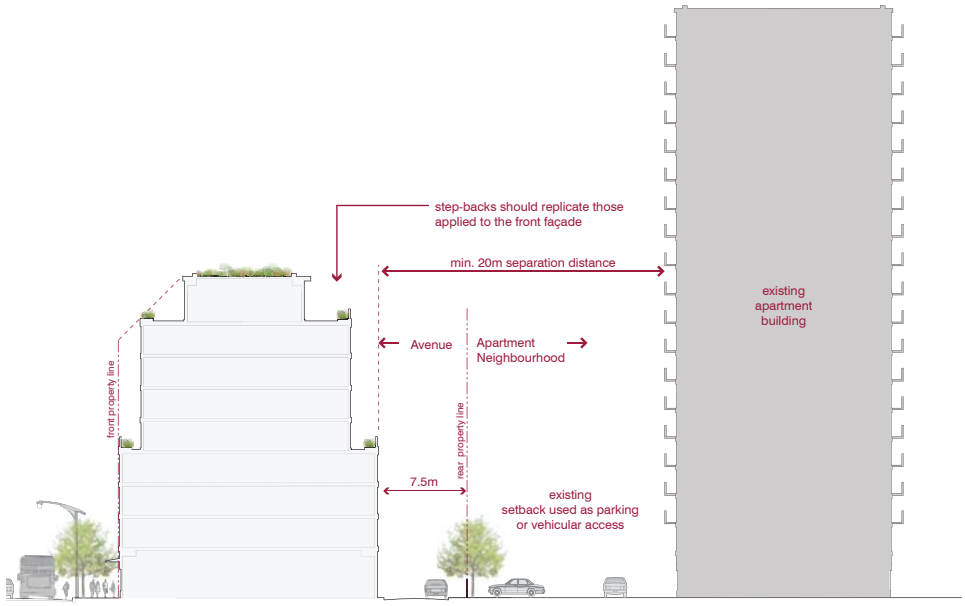
- Providing separation distance between existing apartment buildings and new mid-rise buildings on the Avenue, particularly in configurations where there will be facing windows. The separation distance between buildings should be a minimum of 20 metres;
- Ensuring the rear of new mid-rise buildings on the Avenue are treated with a positive edge, particularly in the Configuation 2. In this instance a high level of landscaping should be applied to the area at the rear of the mid-rise building; and
- Ensuring that the setback is consistent with the other rear transitions (5A - C) to allow for a continuous rear lane system.

In instances where there is an open space associated with an apartment building or grouping of apartment buildings, new mid-rise buildings should follow Performance Standard 5B for the rear transition to ensure appropriate setbacks and mitigation of shadows from new buildings on open spaces.

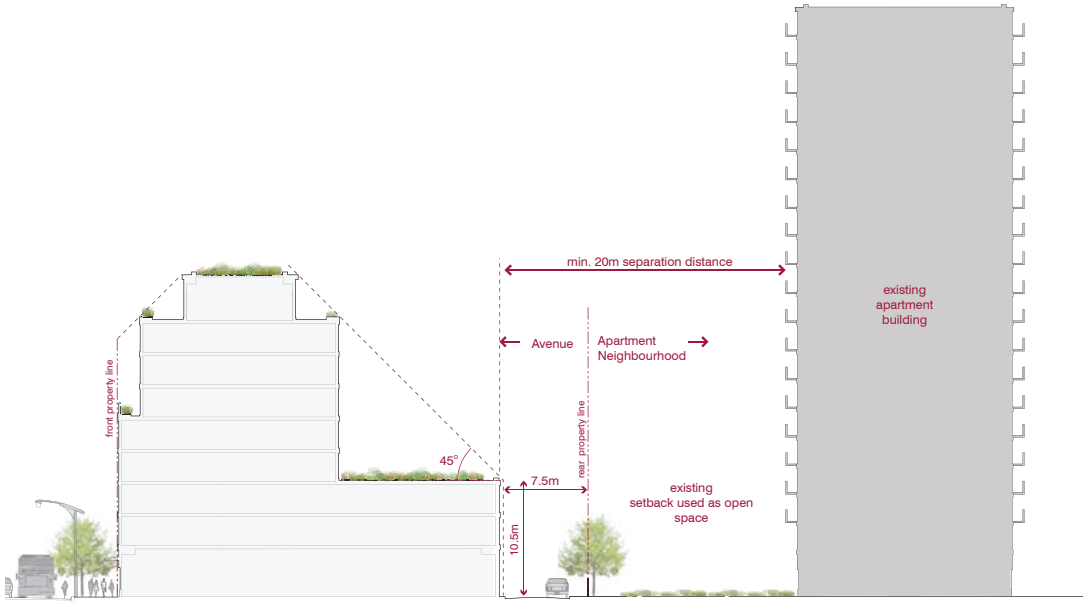
There may be conditions where an Apartment building is located perpendicular to the Avenue's rear property line (Configuration 3), but this configuration is less common. This Performance recommends a 15 metre separation distance for existing apartment buildings up to 20 storeys, and at higher adjacent heights, additional separation is likely necessary. Given the possible variations of glazing on the existing apartment buildings, these should be dealt with on a site-by-site basis.

Configuration 1: Where apartment buildings are located parallel to the Avenue's rear property line with a setback that is used as parking or a laneway (example shown at Sheppard Ave. East & Kennedy Rd.). [3]

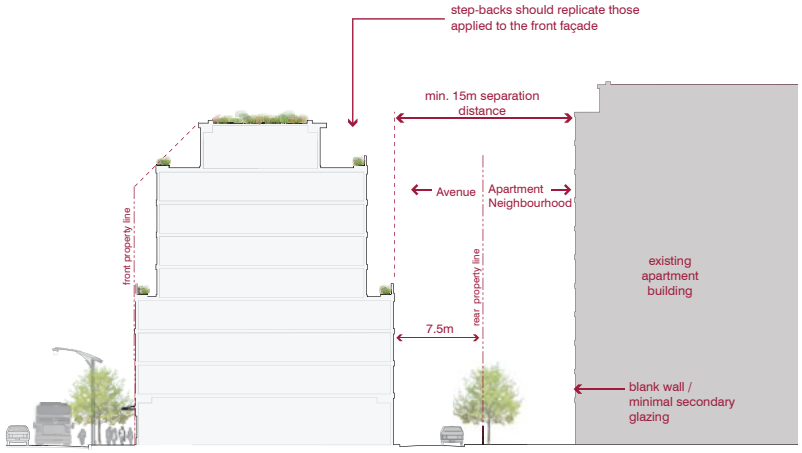
Configuration 2: Where apartment buildings are located parallel to the Avenue's rear property line with a setback that is used as open space (Example shown at Eglinton Ave. East & Midland Ave.). [4]



Configuration 1: Existing Apartment buildings are located parallel to the Avenue's rear property line with a setback that is used as parking or a laneway.



Configuration 2: Existing Apartment buildings are located parallel to the Avenue's rear property line with a setback that is used as open space.



Configuration 3: Existing Apartment buildings are perpendicular to the Avenue property with minimal or no windows facing the Avenue property.

Performance Standard #6:
Corner Sites: Heights & Angular Planes

On corner sites, the front angular plane and heights that apply to the Avenue frontage will also apply to the secondary street frontage.

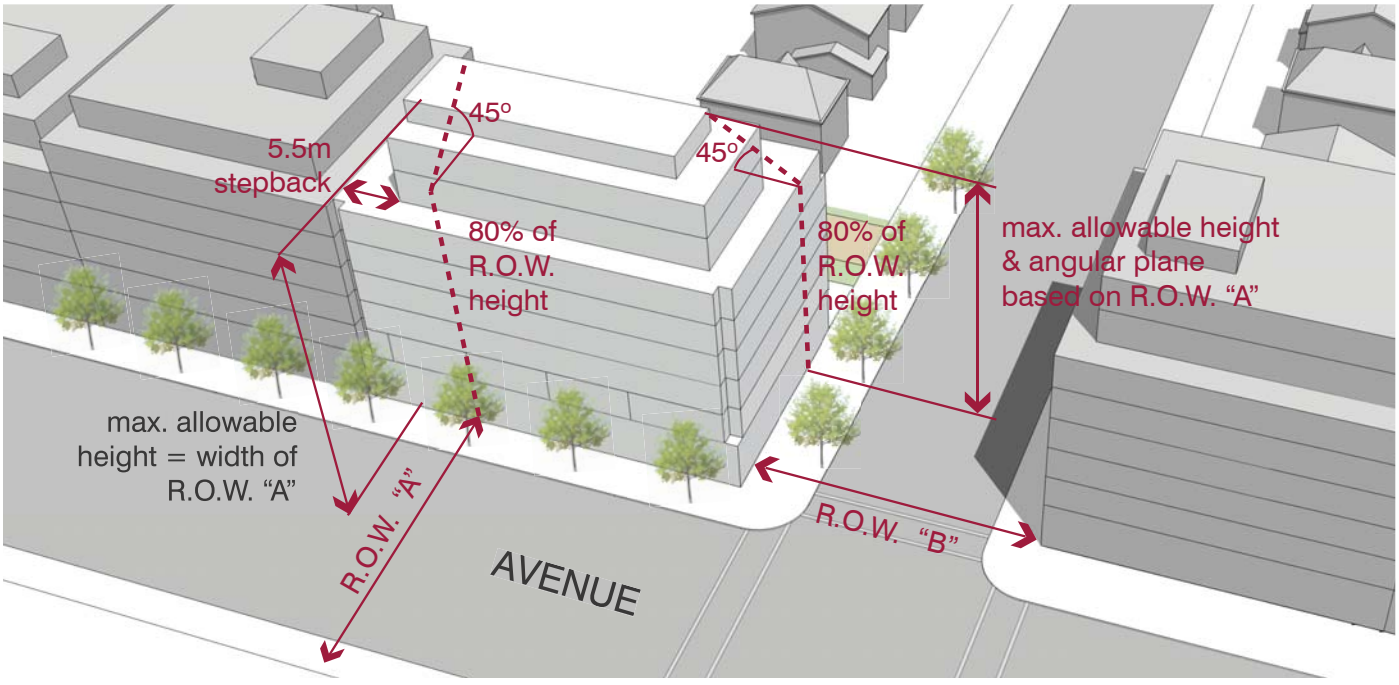
Rationale

The front angular plane and heights should apply to the side street in order to:

- Prevent awkward transitions around corners where the right-of-way is a different width;
- Ensure that building height and massing has a minimal visual impact on adjacent streets; and,
- Taper buildings on their taller floors to ensure sun penetration.

Exceptions to this condition may include key locations (e.g. where two major Avenues intersect) where design features should give prominence to the corner.

Where two Avenues intersect, the widest right-of-way will be used to determine the step-backs and heights that will apply to both frontages. Where this occurs, rear transition angular planes will continue to apply.

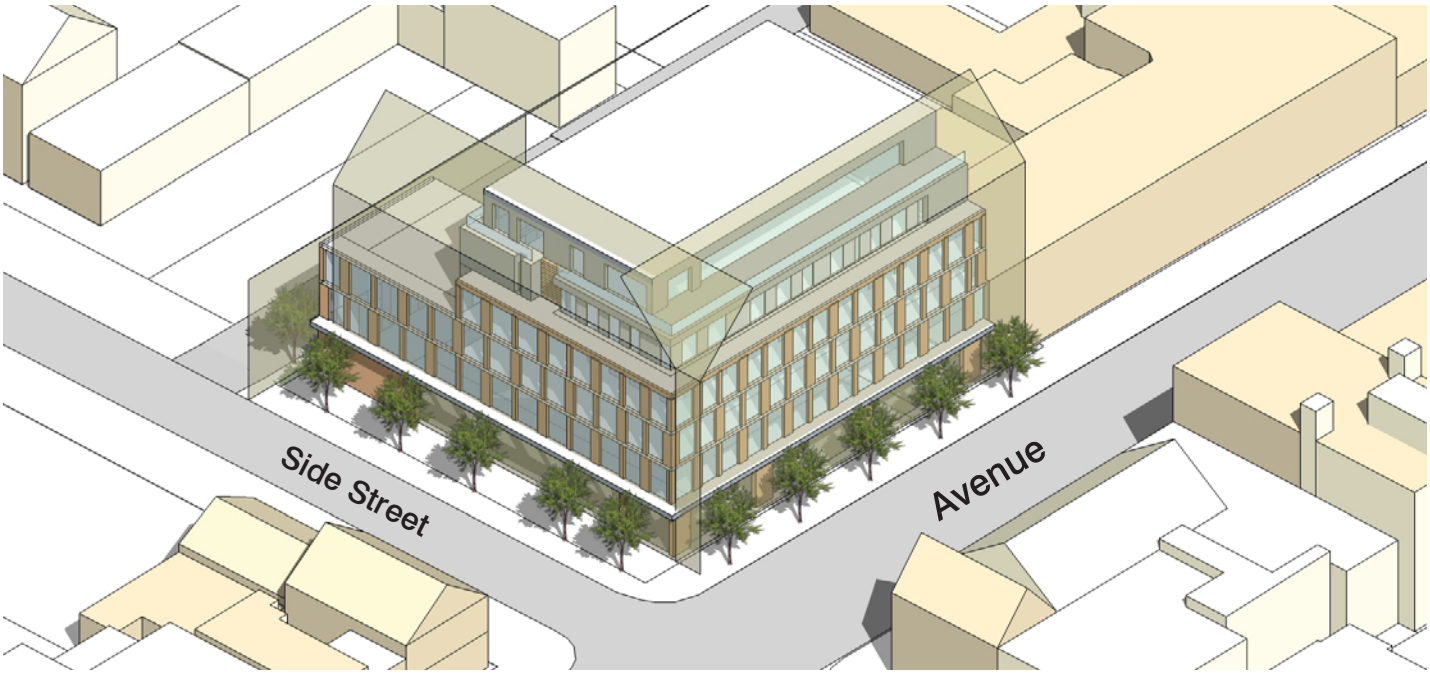


Example of corner site conditions.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form
Policies: 1 a)

4.5 Mixed Use Areas
Policies: 2 c)



Angular planes applied to a 20 metre tall building.

Performance Standard #7A:
Minimum Sidewalk Zones

Mid-rise buildings may be required to be set back at grade to provide a minimum sidewalk zone.

- Right-of-ways of 20 to 30 metres inclusive should provide a minimum sidewalk dimension of 4.8 metres.
- Right-of-ways greater than 30 metres should provide a minimum sidewalk dimension of 6.0 metres.
- Sites on Avenues that are Transit City routes may be required to have additional setbacks from the property line to building face at intersections to accommodate transit infrastructure - this will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

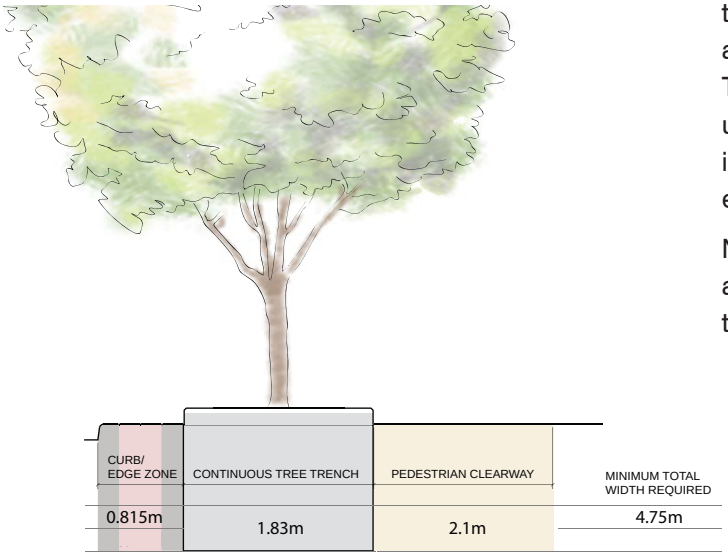


Illustration from the City of Toronto's "Vibrant Streets: Toronto's Coordinated Street Furniture Program" showing street tree planting details. [5]

Rationale

The Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings study is as much about creating an attractive, welcoming and safe pedestrian realm as it is about creating mid-rise buildings for people to live and work in. The Official Plan identifies Avenues as "important corridors along major streets where reurbanization is anticipated and encouraged to create new housing and job opportunities while improving the pedestrian environment, the look of the street, shopping opportunities and transit service for community residents." (Official Plan p. 2-15). All of the City's sixteen completed Avenue Studies contain recommendations regarding minimum standards for the functional and aesthetic characteristics of Avenue sidewalks.

Many Avenues are facing competing demands for space to accommodate a range of uses within the public right-of-way. These include sidewalks, street trees, marketing areas, vehicular lanes, on-street and dedicated transit lanes, platforms for LRTs along Transit City routes, bike lanes, on-street parking and utilities. To accommodate all of these uses in certain instances requires a much wider right-of-way than exists.

New development provides an opportunity to achieve minimum standards for Avenue sidewalks through setbacks. A 4.8 metre minimum dimension is

consistent with the standards from the City's Vibrant Streets Manual, which outlines the requirements for Typical Main Streets and allows for an Edge Zone, Continuous Tree Trench, and the Pedestrian Clearway. The 4.8 metre width does not take into account additional space that may be desired for cafés, marketing spaces, etc. Portions of building frontages may require greater setbacks to accommodate this.

For right-of-ways up to 30 metres, the 4.8 metre minimum width is adequate for the Avenues. Right-of-ways greater than 30 metres – which may develop with taller buildings and are likely to carry higher volumes of traffic – require wider sidewalks of at least 6.0 metres to provide for pedestrian comfort.

Setbacks should be coordinated with other City initiatives, in particular Transit City, where the existing curb may be moved. The width of the sidewalk should be determined based on proposed, or future, curb locations.

Below-grade parking structures may not protrude into the public realm, but may extend as far as the front property line, or in line with the setbacks.

Official Plan Reference

2.2 Structuring Growth in the City: Integrating Land Use and Transportation

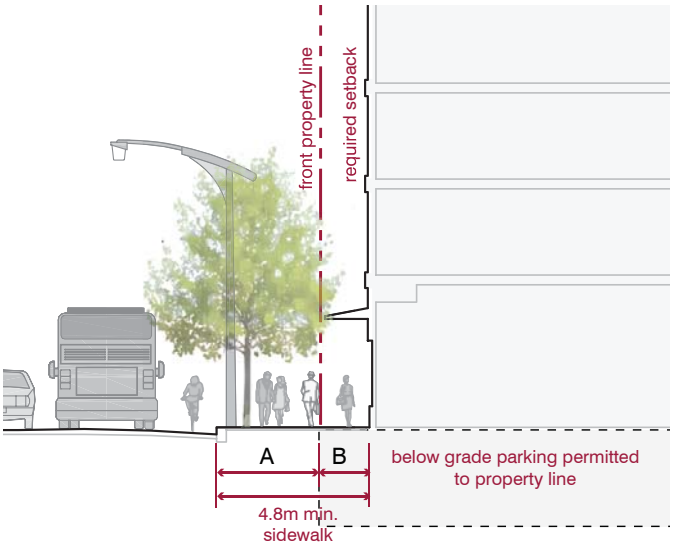
Policies: 3 b)

2.3.1 Healthy Neighbourhoods

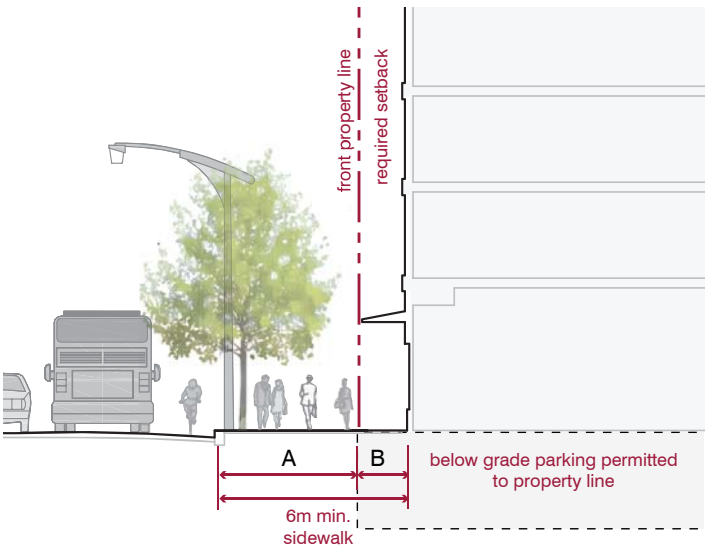
Policies: 7 b)

3.1.1 The Public Realm

Policies: 6 a), 6 b) and 11 a)



Example of minimum sidewalk width on right-of-ways that are 30m or less.



Example of minimum sidewalk width on right-of-ways greater than 30m.

A = Existing sidewalk
B = Setback required

Performance Standard #7B: Streetscapes

Avenue streetscapes should provide the highest level of urban design treatment to create beautiful, safe and accessible pedestrian environments and great places to shop, work and live.

- The design of Avenue streetscapes should follow the classifications, placement guidelines, and design details in the Toronto Urban Design Streetscape Manual (for more information see www.toronto.ca/planning/urbdesign/streetscape/index.htm or contact streetscapemanual@toronto.ca).
- Tree planting strategies should ensure sustainable conditions for the growth of mature trees on the Avenues.

Rationale

Streetscape design plays as important a role as the design of buildings in enhancing the Avenues and promoting strong pedestrian-oriented streets. Elements such as trees, lighting, street furniture, pavement materials and public art should all be used to animate the street, define sidewalk zones, and provide visual interest. The arrangement and location of streetscape amenities, should allow for comfortable and easy circulation and easy navigation for all persons, including persons with disabilities.

Street trees provide beauty and create improved microclimate conditions on the Avenues. The minimum sidewalk of 4.8 metres recommended in Performance Standard 7A will allow for tree planting as well as other pedestrian amenities. On some wider right-of-ways, typically on more suburban Avenues, the 6.0 metre sidewalk zone could potentially allow for a second row of trees to be planted within private properties.

St. Clair Avenue West

King Street West

Avenues streetscapes should be designed to include pedestrian amenities, including trees, benches, transit shelters and public art.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.1 The Public Realm

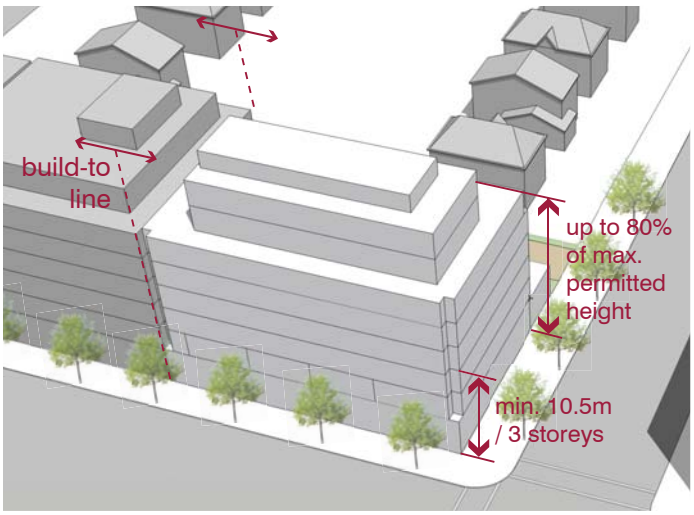
Policies: 6 a), 6 b), and 10 e)

"Toronto's New Street Furniture" program will be part of the Avenues streetscapes. [6]

Performance Standard #8A:
Side Property Line: Continuous Street Walls

Mid-rise buildings should be built to the side property lines, to create continuous façades along the Avenues and avoid blank side walls.

- Mid-rise buildings should be built to the side property lines for no less than 10.5 metres of building height and up to 6 storeys (see Performance Standard 4B).
- The portion of the building above the street wall may step back from the side property lines to provide side walls incorporating windows.
- The construction process used to build a sidewall next to the sidewall of an adjacent building should result in a minimal gap to avoid unsightly areas that are unusable and collect refuse.



Example of zero side yard setbacks.

Rationale

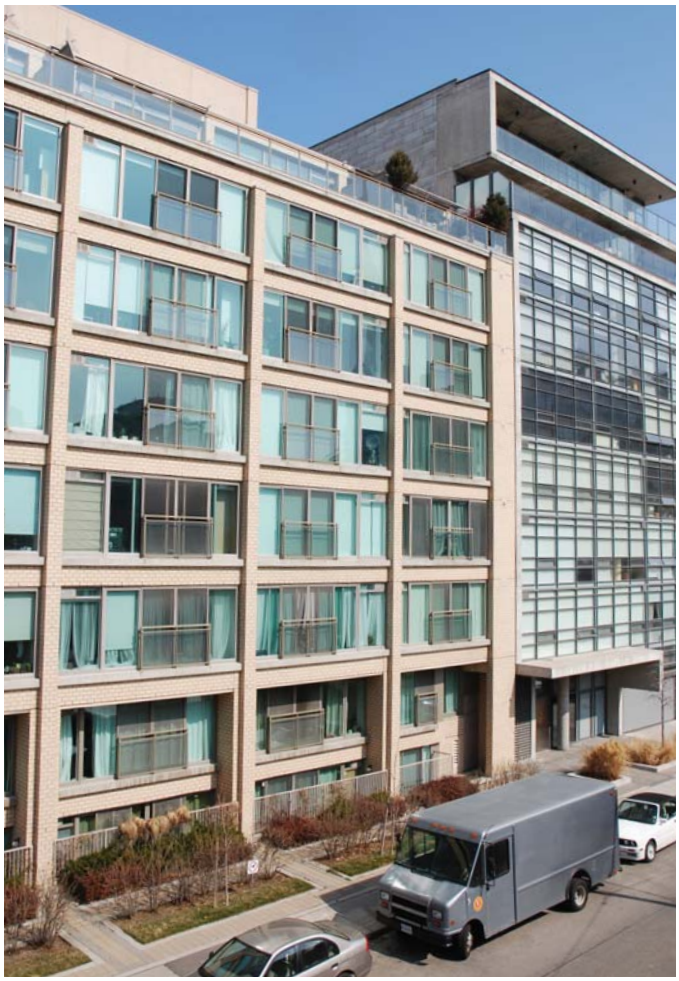
The vision for the Avenues is based on the evolution of a generally continuous street wall lined with shops, restaurants, cafés and other community and commercial services. A break in the continuity of the street wall and building fabric is disruptive to the success of the public function of the Avenue. For this reason, front yard parking, automotive uses and buildings with large setbacks are detrimental to the evolution of the Avenues in mixed-use and commercial areas. The “street wall” portion of a building’s front façade is defined as a minimum of 10.5 metres (3 storeys) and up to the 80% height. The streetwall should therefore generally be built to the side property line.

The post-war Avenues have large parcels (very deep and very wide lots) which lend themselves to the design of four-sided buildings, as opposed to the continuous street walls proposed in this Performance Standard. In this condition, this Performance Standard would not apply. See Performance Standard 8B for additional information.

See Performance Standards 8B - 8E for more detail.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form
Policies: 1 a)



Continuous street wall.

A street wall of five floors with upper floors stepped back (40 Bond Street in Manhattan designed by Herzog & de Meuron). [7]

Three and four storey street wall. [8]

Performance Standard #8B:
Side Property Line: Limiting Blank Side Walls

Blank sidewalls should be designed as an architecturally finished surface and large expanses of blank sidewalls should be avoided.

- Blank side wall conditions may be acceptable up to a height of 6 storeys if treated properly.
- Required side step-back walls should be a minimum of 5.5 metres from the property line to allow for sufficient glazing.
- To mitigate the impact of blank side walls they should be designed with a material finish that complements the architectural character of the main building façade(s).

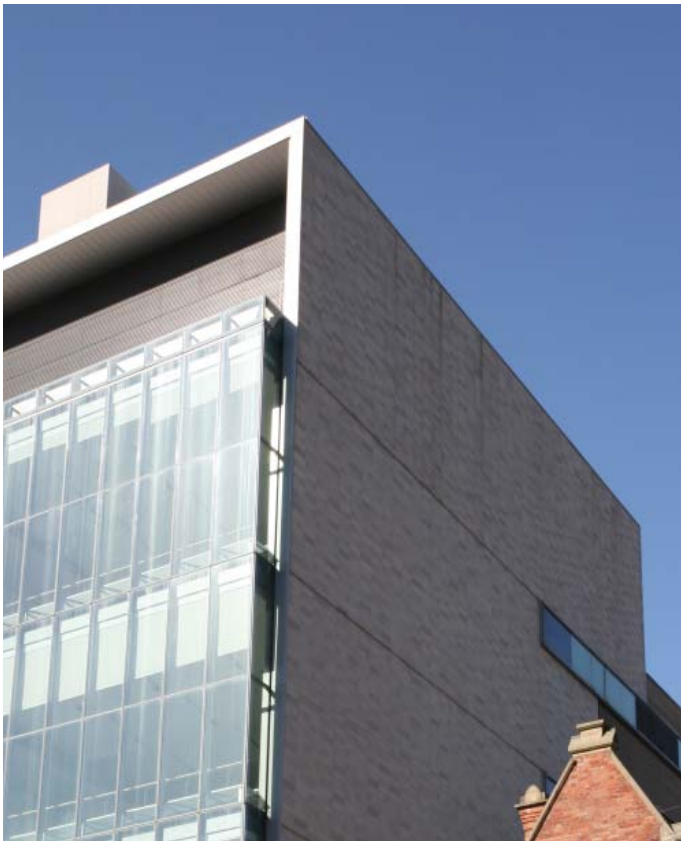
Rationale

As the Avenues reurbanize with mid-rise buildings, some buildings will be taller than existing structures or new structures that are not built to the full height limit. The extent of these blank walls is a result of both the height of adjacent buildings and whether the upper storeys of the new building step back at the sides. While exposed blank sidewalls are to be expected during this period of transition, design standards are required to mitigate the appearance and height of blank walls.

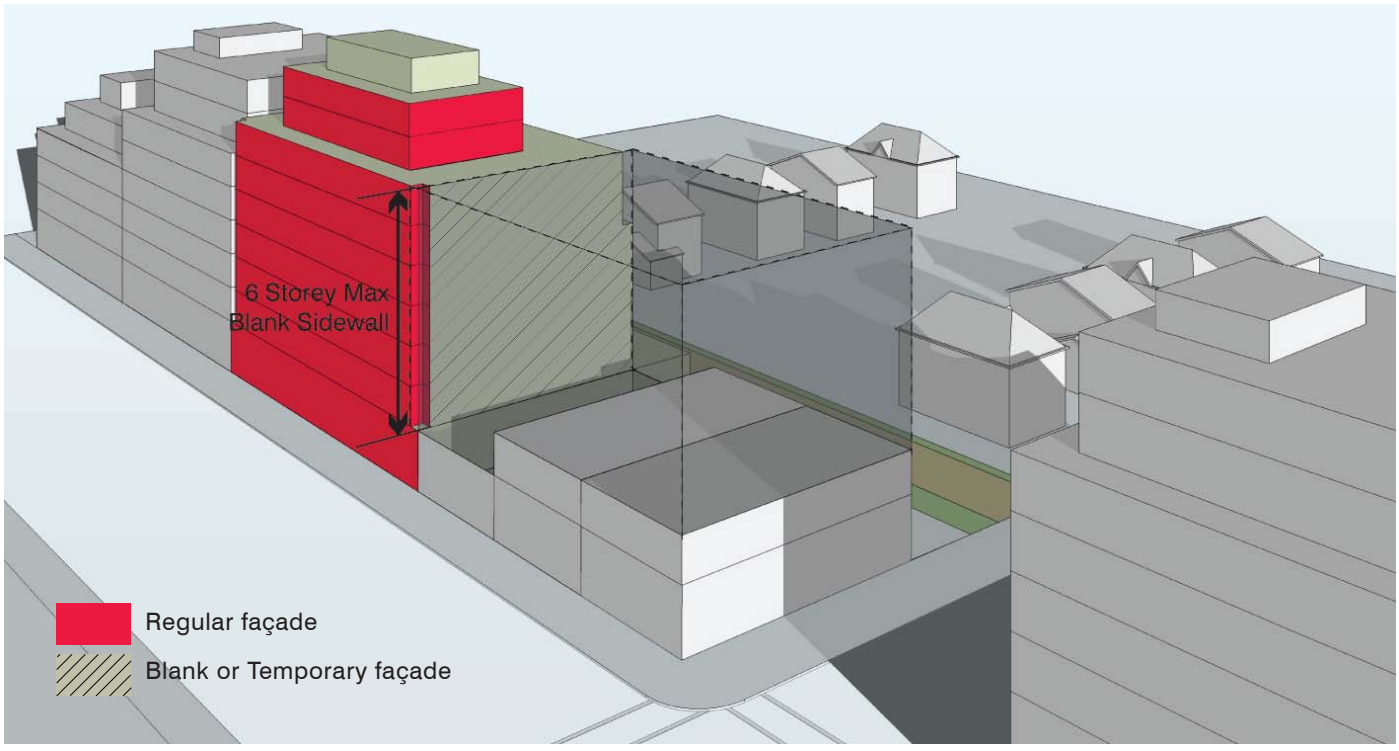
Development sites on the post-war Avenues are less likely to be adjacent to existing properties with buildings built to side property lines. Many of these sites also tend to have larger lot sizes and wider frontages. The development model that has emerged to-date for these larger sites demonstrates a preference for four-sided buildings that are fully glazed and employ large side property setbacks. In some instances where lots are deep, the length of the building is positioned perpendicular to the Avenue. In these cases, blank walls are generally not an issue except on the lower levels of the building that may extend closer to the side property lines. For these Avenues a more porous street wall condition should be expected.

See Performance 8A: Continuous Street Walls.

Example of a side step-back at upper storeys.



Example of a blank side will with appropriate materials and architectural detailing.



Example of corner site conditions.

Performance Standard #8C:
Side Property Line: Step-backs at Upper Storeys

There should be breaks at upper storeys between new and existing, or multiple new mid-rise buildings, providing sky-views and increased sunlight access to the sidewalk. This can be achieved through side step-backs at the upper storeys.

- Side property step-backs of 5.5 metres should be provided above the 80% height to increase sky views and sunlight access to the sidewalk.
- Where more "porous" street walls are desirable, side step-backs are encouraged above the minimum building height of 3 storeys.
- Buildings that are 20 metres or (6 storeys) in height or less, are not required to have upper storey side step-backs.

Rationale

As the Avenues develop, it will be important to maintain sky-views and sunlight access to the public realm. On larger right-of-ways, this will be particularly important, because the maximum building heights will be taller.

By requiring side property step-backs at upper storeys, the potential for a "canyon effect" on the Avenues will be avoided.

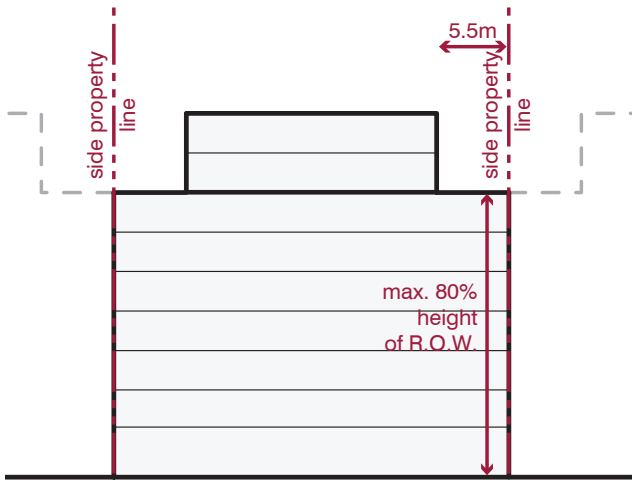
Where properties have a wider frontage, the uppermost storeys of the building can step back on the sides to allow for side glazing, reducing the extent of blank sidewalls. Side step-backs of upper storeys will reduce the height of blank sidewalls and provide both greater light penetration and varied rooflines.

Narrow sites will have trouble meeting these side property step-backs and may not be able to achieve the maximum allowable heights.

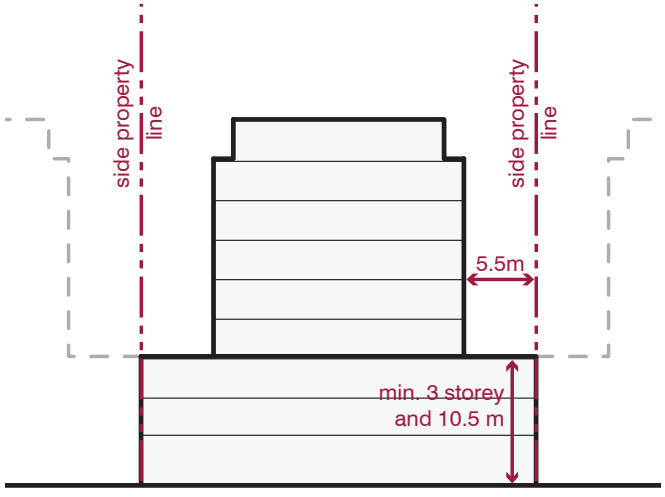
Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form

Policies: 3 a), 3 b), 3 c), 3 d), and 4



Example where a tall street wall is desirable.



Example where a more porous street wall is desirable, side step-backs are encouraged.

Performance Standard #8D:
Side Property Line: Existing Side Windows

Existing buildings with side wall windows should not be negatively impacted by new developments.

- Where adjacent sites have walls with windows, new buildings must ensure a minimum of 5.5 metres from the existing building wall.
- Side walls of new buildings that are set back a minimum of 5.5 metres from the property line should incorporate glazing where possible.
- Some conditions will require additional setbacks (e.g. where the existing building has primary windows on the side wall). Setbacks in this case will be determined on a site-by-site basis.

Rationale

Performance Standard 8A addresses a condition where there is a desire for the creation of a continuous street wall by minimizing or eliminating "gaps" between buildings. This fabric will likely be desirable in areas that have a typical main street fabric (e.g. parts of Queen Street East and West). This will also be dependent on the width of a building site, and where it is necessary for development to maximize density and build to a zero lot line.

However, there are some locations on the Avenues where this condition is not appropriate, and sometimes occurs where Mixed Use Areas of an Avenue abut an Apartment Neighbourhood on the Avenue. A visual survey of the City's Avenues indicated that there are sites where existing buildings have windows on side walls that are close to or follow the side yard property line. It will be important that new development on adjacent sites does not negatively impact these existing buildings.

Performance Standard #8E:
Side Property Line: Side Street Setbacks

Buildings should be set back along the side streets to provide transitions to adjacent residential properties with front yard setbacks.

- Applies where adjacent side street properties are low-scale residential form with front yard setbacks.
- This setback should extend for 15% of the side street lot frontage (lot depth) and range from a minimum of 2.0 metres to a maximum of 5.0 metres.

Rationale

Side setbacks along side streets will create a transition between single family homes in adjacent Neighbourhoods and the new mid-rise buildings envisioned along the Avenues. This will help to maintain views from the neighbourhood and will create a gradual transition from the Neighbourhoods street to the Avenue.

Official Plan Reference

2.3.1 Healthy Neighbourhoods
Policies: 2 b)

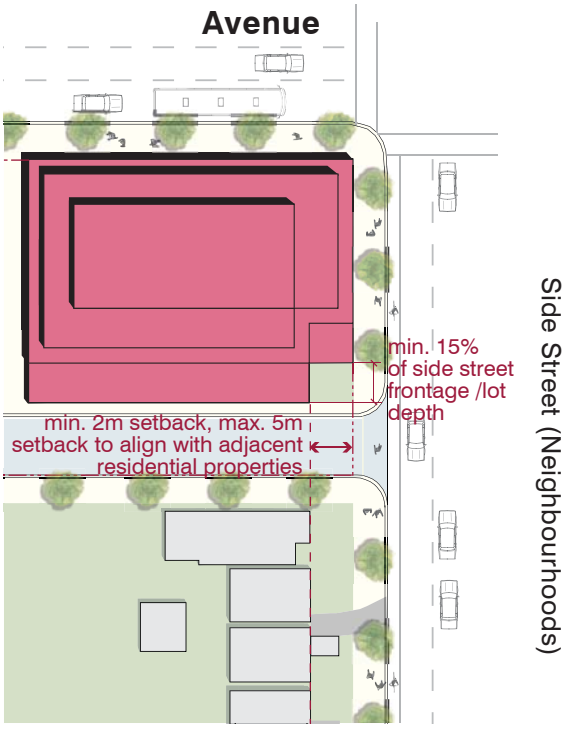


Diagram illustrating the side street setback.

Visualization of the side street setback.

Performance Standard #9:
Building Width: Maximum Width

Where mid-rise building frontages are more than 60 metres in width, building massing should be articulated or "broken up" to ensure that façades are not overly long.

- Create multiple buildings on wide sites.
- Break up the façades through the use of vertical breaks and step-backs.

Rationale

Throughout the city, there are a number of examples of buildings that are exceedingly long. These long, uninterrupted façades have a negative impact on the pedestrian realm for a number of reasons. Long façades at grade provide less interest and variation at the pedestrian level. At upper storeys, long, continuous façades prevent sunlight access and skyviews to the street (see also Performance Standard 8C - Side Property Line: Step-backs at Upper Storeys).

Building façades should be broken up both physically and visually. Breaks in long building façades provide mid-block connections for pedestrians and allow for the creation of additional "corners".

Example of a long building - buildings are broken up to create relief along the Avenue. [9]

Performance Standard #10:
At-Grade Uses: Residential

Where retail at grade is not required, and residential uses are permitted, the design of ground floors should provide adequate public/ private transition and allow for future conversion to retail uses.

Rationale - Flexible Uses At Grade

On certain Avenues, it is expected that retail may not be feasible in the immediate term, but may be feasible in the future.

Where residential uses are permitted at grade facing the Avenue, the design of the ground floor should allow for adequate separation from the sidewalk to provide transition from the public sidewalk to private residences. The design should also allow for the potential to convert these residential areas to commercial uses in the future.

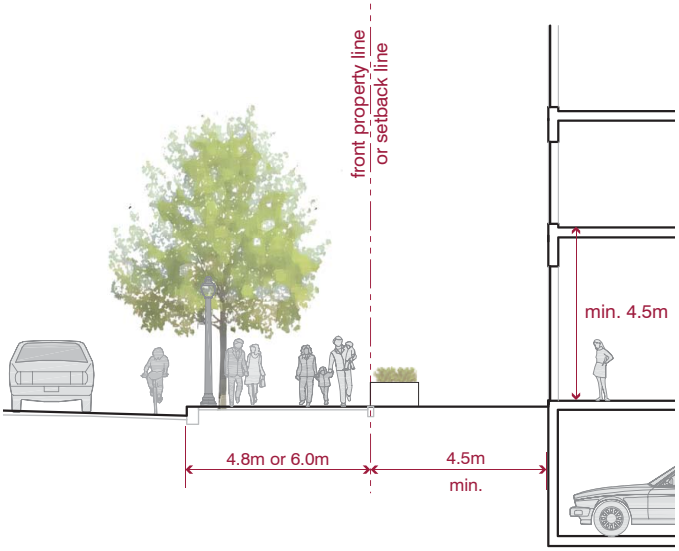
Flexible Standard A: a minimum setback of 4.5 metres is required beyond the sidewalk zone and should contain a raised planter, low fencing and/or landscape buffers. The ground floor of the residential units may have individual entrances and can be level with the sidewalk. The minimum floor-to-floor height is 4.5 metres.

These setback zones and floor-to-floor height allows for future conversion to commercial uses.

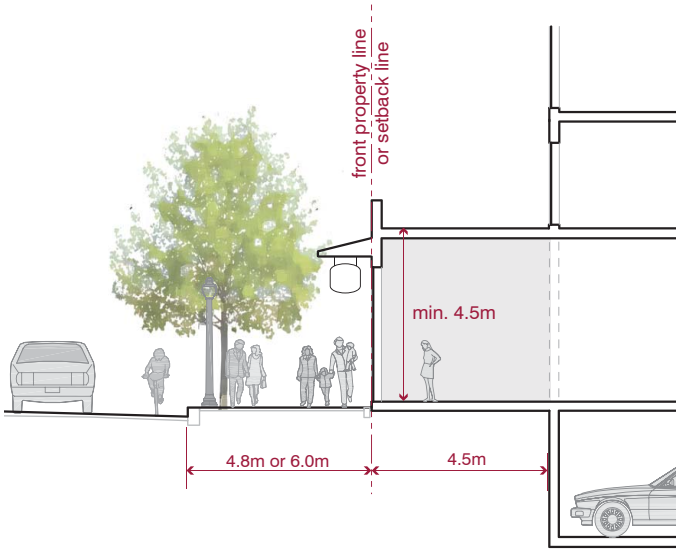
Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form

Policies: 1 b), 1 c)



Flexible Standard A - Before: illustrates a ground floor residential use facing the Avenue.



Flexible Standard A - After: illustrates the conversion to commercial use.

Rationale - Residential At Grade

On certain Avenues, it is expected that limited portions of the Avenues may include residential uses at grade for the long-term. This is only appropriate where commercial uses are not likely to be viable.

Townhomes are not an appropriate use on the Avenues, and should not be permitted on the Avenues. The townhouse form creates a privatized frontage along the Avenues, which is difficult to convert to commercial uses in the future and townhouses do not provide the minimal level of intensification desired for the Avenues.

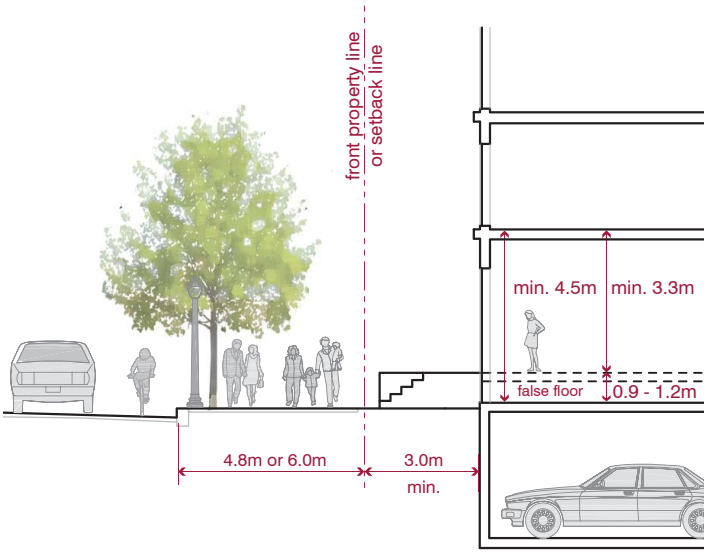
Where ground floor residential uses are acceptable, they should avoid creating conditions along the Avenues that detract from the role of the sidewalk as an inviting and attractive public space. The interface between private uses and the public sidewalk can create awkward conditions if not mitigated through a series of design measures that create adequate separation and animated frontages. Special design standards will be applied to ground floor residential uses to ensure that:

- there is a suitable transition from the public sidewalk to private residential units;
- that landscaping and other design features are used to augment this transition zone; and
- active entrances to residential uses assist in animating the frontage.

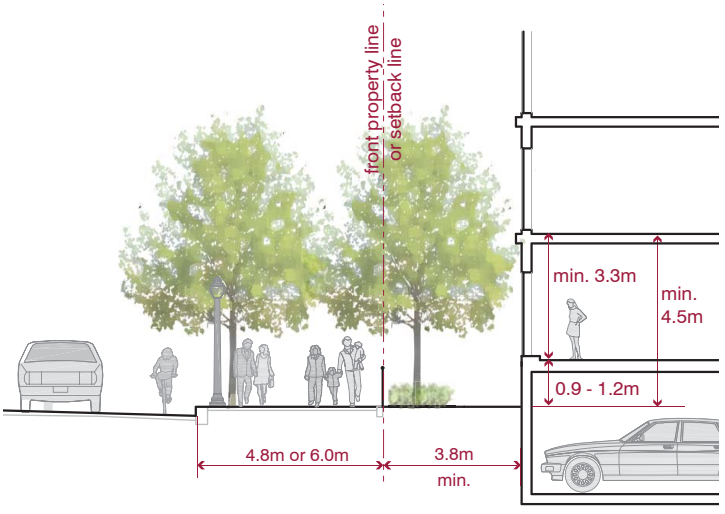
Residential Standard B: is the preferred design solution that incorporates individual unit entrances accessed from the Avenue sidewalk. A minimum setback of 3.0 metres is required beyond the 4.8 or 6.0 metre sidewalk zone that contains front steps, a raised planter and porch/terrace area. The ground floor of the residential units should be raised between a minimum of 0.9 metres to a maximum of 1.2 metres above the sidewalk level as measured from the base of the front steps. The minimum floor-to-floor height (ground floor to second floor) is 3.6 metres. The change in grade could also be achieved through a false floor.

Residential Standard C: applies to special circumstances where future retail is not expected (See Section 2.3.2: Recommendations for Retail at grade, and Appendix B: Retail Study), or individual unit entrances cannot be provided. A minimum setback of 3.8 metres is required beyond the sidewalk zone that contains a row of trees and a landscape buffer. The ground floor of the residential units should be raised a minimum of 0.9 metres to a maximum of 1.2 metres above the adjacent sidewalk level. The minimum height from the sidewalk level to the second floor is 4.5 metres.

Indoor amenity spaces are discouraged along the Avenue frontage at grade as well, as they also tend to become privatized, less animated spaces.



Residential Standard B



Residential Standard C

Performance Standard #11:
Setbacks for Civic Spaces

In special circumstances where civic or public spaces are desired, additional setbacks may be encouraged.

Rationale

Special corners or major intersections may be appropriate locations for civic plazas or open spaces. Where this is appropriate, new mid-rise buildings may be set back at the corners.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form
Policies: 3 a) and 4

An example of a civic plaza framed by mid-rise buildings set back from the corner - Tivoli Square, Washington DC. [10,11]

Performance Standard #12:
Balconies & Projections

Balconies and other projecting building elements should not negatively impact the public realm or prevent adherence to other Performance Standards.

- Balconies on the front façade (projecting or inset) should not be located within the first 3 storeys.
- Balconies on the street-facing façade should be inset behind the street wall within the Pedestrian Perception Step-back zone (between 3 - 6 storeys).
- Balconies on the rear façade should be setback a minimum of 10 metres from the rear property line.
- Balconies or other permanent building elements should not encroach into the public right of way or setback.
- Balconies and other projections (e.g. railings) should be contained within all angular planes.

Rationale

The Performance Standards in this document have been developed to promote appropriately-scaled and massed mid-rise buildings through angular plane and height recommendations. The intent of these Performance Standards is to allow mid-rise buildings to frame the street while avoiding negative impacts on the public realm or neighbouring properties, including excessive shadowing or overlook. Therefore, any architectural features that project from the building face (horizontally or vertically) should be contained within the building envelope as defined by all angular planes.

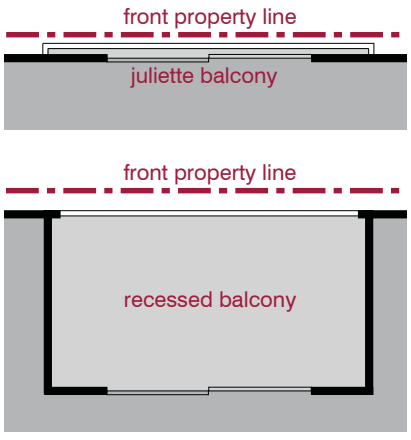
Projecting balconies should not be located within the Pedestrian Perception Zone, or below the first step-back. Within this portion of the building, recessed balconies, Juliet balconies and terraces (as part of a step-back) are acceptable. See Performance Standard 4C.

Full floor height screens or louvers are sometimes utilized on balconies for noise or sun protection. The two considerations for the design and use of these screens include their material and their percentage of the total façade area. Generally, these should not form more than 50% of the Avenue-facing façade.

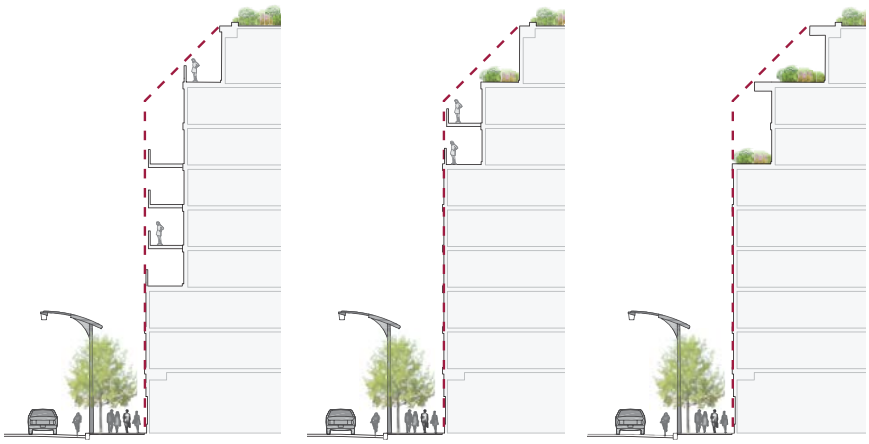
Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form

Policies: 1, 3 b), 3 c), 3 d), and 6



Plan view of appropriate balcony types below the first step-back location.



Projection, balconies, railings and overhangs should fit within all angular planes.

Performance Standard #13:
Roofs & Roofscapes

Mechanical penthouses may exceed the maximum height limit by up to 5 metres but may not penetrate any angular planes.

- All mechanical penthouses should be designed and clad with materials to complement the building façades.
- The portion of the roof not utilized as mechanical penthouses should be developed as green roofs and/or usable outdoor amenity space. Green roofs should be compliant with the City's Green Roof By-law.

Rationale

Mechanical penthouses above maximum allowable heights are already permitted through City zoning by-laws. Mechanical penthouses that extend above the height limit, but fall within the angular planes, will not impact shadowing, will generally not be visible from the adjacent Avenue sidewalks and are minimally visible from the opposite sidewalk. By keeping penthouses within the angular planes it will position the penthouse to the centre of the roof. However, as mechanical penthouses will be visible from adjacent properties, including neighbourhoods, they must be designed with materials that are complementary to the architecture of the building. Methods for reducing the height and size of mechanical penthouses should be explored or integrated into the top floor of the building.

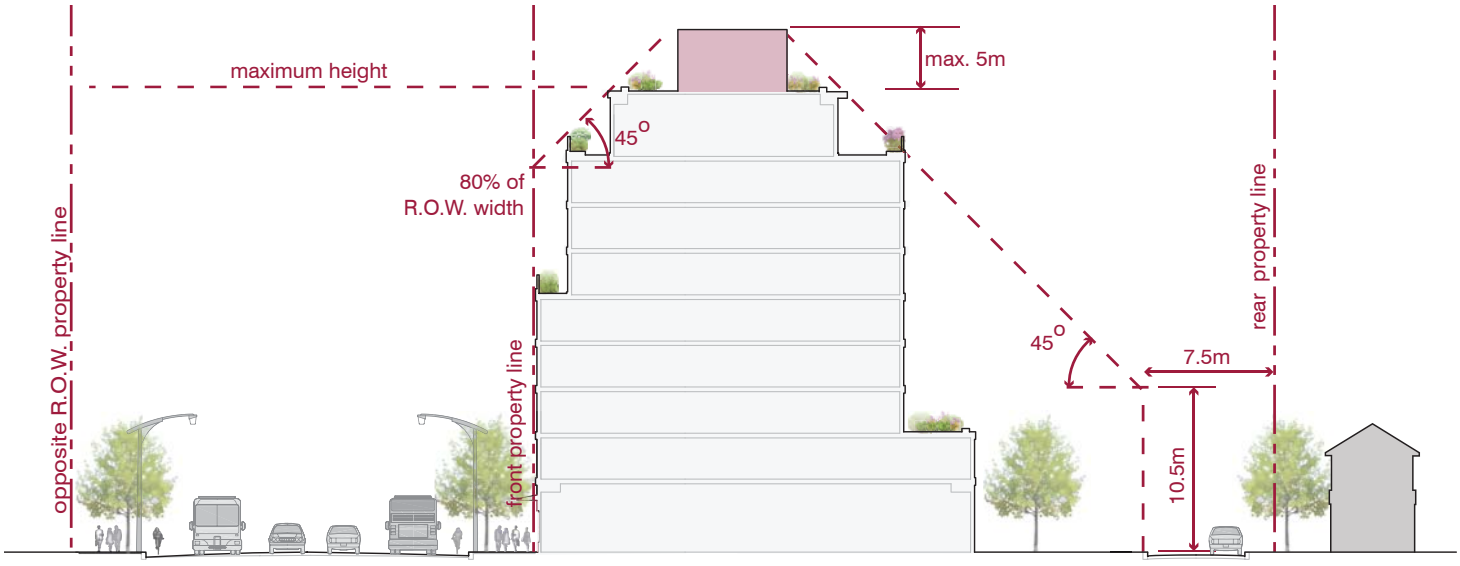
Where it is not possible to achieve a mechanical penthouse within these guidelines, the optimal building height may not be achieved or the mechanical penthouse will need to be located within the uppermost storey of a building.

Sustainable technologies, such as photovoltaic panels, should be encouraged for the roofs of mid-rise buildings. These technologies may take up more space than a typical rooftop mechanical penthouse, but should still be contained within the angular planes.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form

Policies: 1, 3 b), 3 c), 3 d) and 6



Example of mechanical penthouse placement within all angular planes.

Performance Standard #14:
Exterior Building Materials

Buildings should utilize high-quality materials selected for their permanence, durability and energy efficiency.

Rationale

Official Plan Amendment 66 provides the City of Toronto with new powers over the exterior design of buildings as well as the inclusion of sustainable building features under paragraphs 2(iv) and (v) of Section 114(5). These new provisions will help the City to achieve the recommendations in this performance standard, and the study as a whole.

Building materials are a key component of exterior building design, and the choice of appropriate materials is integral to the process of creating new buildings that will positively influence the character of the Avenue streetscape.

The use of appropriate exterior building materials at grade, particularly at the street wall and areas which are visible from the public realm, is an important design consideration to help new development support the public realm and fit with the existing and/or planned context.

Certain materials should be discouraged on façades visible from the public realm, however innovative use of materials is encouraged.

Through the City's Site Plan control review process, new development will provide drawings depicting the exterior design, including materials (see page 6 of the following document: www.toronto.ca/planning/pdf/dev_approval_form.pdf for required drawings for Site Plan Application submission). In reviewing a project through Site Plan Control, the City can consider and secure the exterior design and exterior architectural details, including its doors, roofs, windows, and decorative elements, such as cornices and belt-courses. The City can also consider general façade materials, which influence a project's character, scale, appearance and how it relates to adjacent buildings.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.1 The Public Realm
Policies: 5

3.1.2 Built Form
Policies: 2 c) and 3 c)

An example of context sensitive façade design and material selection.

Performance Standard #15:
Façade Design & Articulation

Mid-rise buildings will be designed to support the public and commercial function of the Avenue through well articulated and appropriately scaled façades.

- The street wall of buildings on the Avenues should be designed to create a comfortable, yet highly animated, pedestrian environment through a rhythm of multiple retail frontages, architectural articulation, numerous entrances, display windows, canopies and signage.
- The ground floor of all buildings should be articulated and highly transparent, with a minimum 60% of this frontage to be glazed and transparent.
- Building materials will be high quality and contribute to a human-scaled public realm.
- Blank walls should be avoided.
- Utilities, vents and other undesirable elements should be avoided on the lower levels of façades adjacent to the public realm or should be integrated into the architectural composition.
- Permanent opaque covering on windows and doors that prevent views into buildings should be discouraged.

Rationale

Official Plan Amendment 66 provides the City of Toronto with new powers over the exterior design of buildings as well as the inclusion of sustainable building features under paragraphs 2(iv) and (v) of Section 114(5). These new provisions will help the City to achieve the recommendations in this Performance Standard, and the study as a whole.

The façade is the exterior of a building visible to the public, and its exterior design contributes to a more beautiful and engaging Toronto. The exterior design of a façade includes the form, scale, proportion, pattern and materials of building elements, including doors, roofs, windows and decorative elements. It is important to consider the exterior design of a façade at grade as it relates to the general layout and organization of interior spaces closest to the pedestrian environment. In particular, the placement of doors and unobstructed clear glass windows, with little or no tint, play an important role in supporting a safe, accessible and vibrant public realm, provided that the design is also bird friendly. These design measures are necessary to help new development support the public realm and fit with the existing and/or planned context.

A harmonious relationship between a new façade and its context can be achieved through contemporary expression, provided that the existing context, proportions, forms, size and scale are fully respected and appropriate materials are used. In particular, the placement of doors and unobstructed clear glass windows, with little or no tint, play an

important role in supporting a safe, accessible and vibrant public realm. Entrance canopies or awnings, for example, create a vibrant public realm and should be encouraged. A new façade need not be a simple replication of adjacent building façades.

Building articulation is equally important in a building's contribution to human-scale at the street level. The application of sensitive building massing, high quality materials and design excellence will ensure that all new buildings on the Avenues contribute to a great public realm.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.1 The Public Realm
Policies: 5

3.1.2 Built Form
Policies: 2 c) and 3 c)

Monument in Paternoster Square [12]

Examples of modern and historic buildings with façades that have a fine grain character.

Performance Standard #16A: Vehicular Access

Wherever possible, vehicular access to on-site parking, loading, and servicing facilities should be provided from local streets and rear lanes, not from the Avenue.

Rationale

Avenues strategies mandate a pedestrian-focus for the Avenues. All of the previously completed Avenues Studies reviewed have recommended an uninterrupted pedestrian realm by locating driveways and vehicular access points to the rear or side of buildings.

Any new development along the City's Avenues should reiterate the importance of removing vehicular access from Avenues (whether they are currently utilized as main streets or not) with the following guidance:

- Side street access should generally be considered the primary solution
- Narrow sites and mid-block sites should first seek laneway access

If the only point of access available is from the Avenue, then a series of guidelines should be applied to its design, location and width. Examples of key guideline recommendations include a maximum dimension for the entrance-way and no double height access points. The width of the entrance should be as narrow as possible and represent a maximum percentage of the building frontage. See Performance Standard 16B for mid-block vehicular access guidelines.

To improve on existing laneway systems along the Avenues, the City should seek to acquire land to extend laneways to full block length. The Performance Standards for rear transitions (see Performance Standards 5A - 5C) require a minimum 7.5 metre setback from the rear property line which would allow for two-way lane access.

Illustration of a vehicular access point located off of a side streets.

Requirements for loading spaces (both type and size) are set out in the zoning by-law and are dependent on use and gross floor area. Refer to the new draft zoning by-law: www.toronto.ca/zoning/bylaw/ZBL_NewProvision_Chapter220.htm

Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form
Policies: 2 a) and 2 b)

4.5 Mixed Use Areas
Policies: 2 i)

Vehicular access points should be located off of laneways or side streets wherever possible.

Performance Standard #16B:
Mid-Block Vehicular Access for Constrained Sites

Mid-block vehicular access should be avoided wherever possible. However, there are instances where this is the only point of access for certain Avenue sites. For mid-block sites without rear lane access, a front driveway may be permitted, provided established criteria are met, including:

- The driveway is located as far from the adjacent intersection as possible or a minimum of 30 metres from the centre of the driveway to the centre of the nearest side street;
- Appropriate spacing between adjacent driveways is maintained resulting in no more than one driveway every 30 metres;
- A 6.0 metre public lane is provided at the rear of the property which will form part of a continuous laneway system within the block as adjacent properties redevelop;
- As redevelopment occurs, approved mid-block driveways to the Avenue should be designated for shared access to serve adjacent properties in lieu of, and until a rear public laneway is established; and,
- Where front driveways are permitted, they should be contained within the building massing with additional floors built above the driveway.

Rationale

Mid-block vehicular access should be avoided wherever possible as it conflicts with pedestrian movement. However, mid-block access should be considered where no alternatives are available. Where front lane entrances are permitted, they should also facilitate improved access for neighbouring Avenue mid-block sites through shared driveways and rear lane dedication.

On some of the more suburban Avenues, if side street or laneway access is not possible, new development sites that amalgamate several lots with multiple existing curb cuts can potentially retain one entrance on the Avenues in an appropriate location.

Where front driveway access is permitted, it should be incorporated into the definition of the street wall.

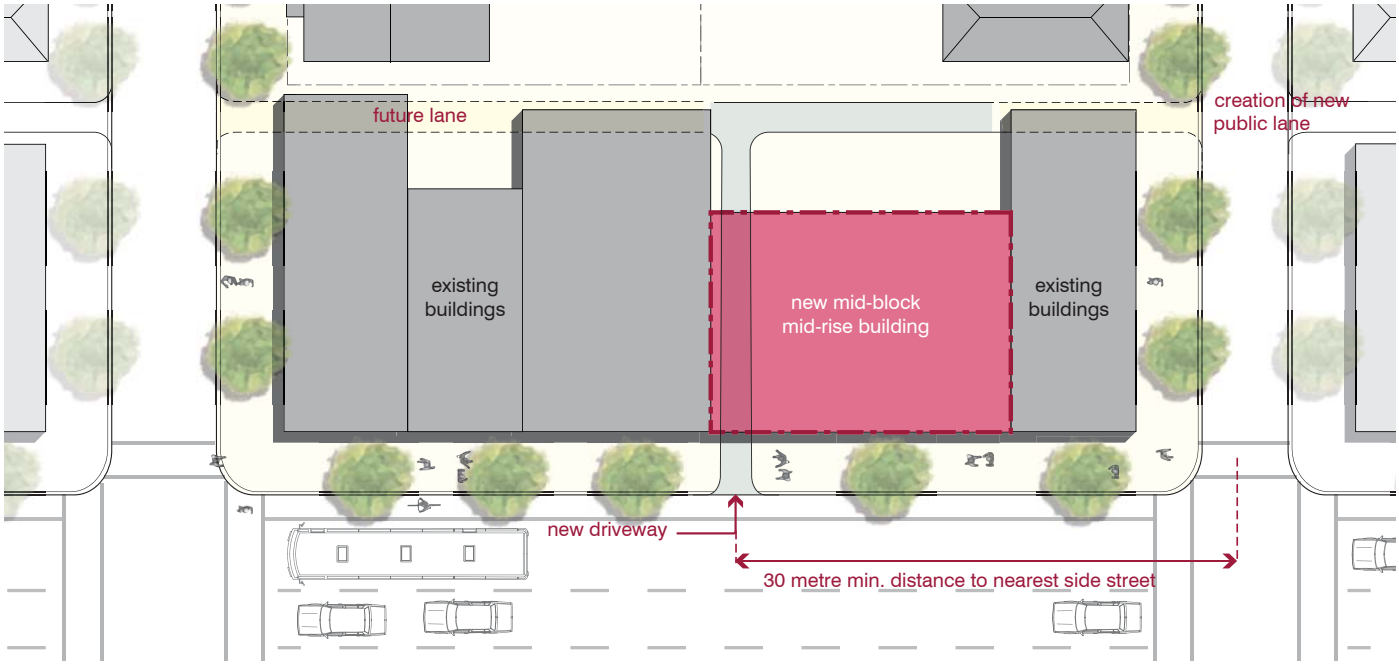
Official Plan Reference

2.2 Structuring Growth in the City: Integrating Land Use and Transportation

Policies: 3 c)

3.1.2 Built Form

Policies: 2 a) and 2 b)



Where a development is permitted to include front lane access, the project should result in improved access for neighbouring mid-block Avenue properties through shared driveway and rear lane dedication.

Performance Standard #17:
Loading & Servicing

Loading, servicing and other vehicular related functions should not detract from the use or attractiveness of the pedestrian realm.

- Ideally, garbage, loading, servicing and utility functions should be integrated within the interior of a building at the rear whenever possible, with access from a rear lane or side street.
- Rear lanes should always exit onto adjacent side streets.

Rationale

Parking, loading and servicing are all necessary functions of a mid-rise building. Loading, servicing and other vehicular related functions should be located away from the pedestrian realm in order to create a safe, functional and attractive pedestrian environment. Ideally, mid-rise buildings should provide for public pick-up.

The creation of a minimum ground floor height of 4.5 metres, as recommended in Performance Standard 3, provides better clearance for garbage and loading functions. However, overhead loading for bulk garbage collection requires a minimum clearance of 6.1 metres.

On constrained properties (very narrow or very shallow), loading and servicing facilities should consider alternative solutions.

Buildings with less than 31 units do not require Type G loading and pick-up space is not required. The standards for loading and servicing are set out in the Zoning By-law and vary by use and floor area.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form
Policies: 2 a) and 2 b)

4.5 Mixed Use Areas
Policies: 2 i) and 2 j)

Vehicular access for loading and servicing should be integrated into the overall building design and located off of secondary streets or laneways.

Performance Standard #18:
Design Quality

Mid-rise buildings will reflect design excellence and green building innovation utilizing high-quality materials that acknowledge the public role of the Avenues.

Rationale

Great design invested in a mid-rise building will promote reinvestment in adjacent properties. In turn, the role of the Avenue as a neighbourhood centre and destination will be strengthened and the market conditions for retail will be enhanced.

The Performance Standards recommended in this document are intended to set a framework for as-of-right zoning permissions for mid-rise buildings on Avenues. They are based on minimum Performance Standards as zoning by-laws or Urban Design Guidelines and will not in themselves result in design excellence. Rather, they will assist in preventing unacceptable forms of development. Recognizing that creative solutions will emerge, which may not match all of the requirements of the Performance Standards, it is recommended that the City appoint a design review panel to review mid-rise building applications located on the Avenues.

Buildings that meet these Performance Standards should move quickly through the approvals process, avoiding the need for rezonings and Official Plan amendments, lengthy processes that have deterred redevelopment of the Avenues in the past.

With new development rights comes an obligation from the development industry to invest in high quality design and materials, green building strategies and to assist the City in creating a spectacular public realm embodied in wide tree-lined sidewalks, parks, open spaces and public art. To encourage a high level of environmental performance, the City offers a 20% refund on development charges for development that meets both Tier 1 and Tier 2 of the Toronto Green Standard.

Through the Site Plan Control process, applicants will be expected to demonstrate how a project embodies design excellence through:

- The use of high quality materials
- Sustainable performance measures of Tier 1 of the Toronto Green Standard are required
- High quality streetscape treatments of the adjacent public realm
- Façade articulation
- Sensitive and creative massing of the building to create appropriate microclimate conditions for pedestrian comfort
- Appropriately scaled and attractive signage
- Transparency at the ground floor level (should be in keeping with the Bird Friendly Performance Measures within the Toronto Green Standard)
- Multiple entranceways facing the street
- Landscaping elements that assist in buffering mid-rise buildings from adjacent low-rise residential buildings
- Screening of utilities and loading areas
- Design of mechanical areas and penthouses that use materials that complement the architecture of the building

Official Plan Reference

1.5.1 Supporting the Foundations of Competitiveness
Policies: 1 c)

3.1.1 The Public Realm
Policies: 1 a), 1 b), 1 c), and 1 d)

(Top) Octavia Gateway Building in San Francisco, CA. [13]
(Above) ROAR 1 Building in Vancouver, BC. [14]

Performance Standard #19A:
Heritage & Character Areas

All mid-rise buildings on the Avenues should respect and be sensitively integrated with heritage buildings in the context of Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs).

Rationale

The Avenues that have built or cultural character (including those that may or may not include listed or designated buildings) have been studied to provide guidance for the City and developers regarding building design and architectural character - see Appendix A: Character Area Study.

The City of Toronto has policies in place that demonstrate the value placed on its heritage properties and heritage conservation districts (HCDs), including requirements for how individual buildings should be protected and integrated into new developments, and this study recognizes these guidelines. Where they are in place, HCDs shall prevail if there is a conflict.

In general, where new mid-rise buildings are developed in Character Areas, building design should be sympathetic to context and certain heritage characteristics. This may include, but is not limited to, building step-backs and cornice lines, façade articulation, and building materials. Where applicable, all of these design elements should be appropriate to their heritage context. For further guidance on specific sites, see Appendix A: Character Area Study.

The following Guidelines will outline the requirements/guidelines for new development:

- in Heritage Conservation Districts
- adjacent to heritage buildings
- in Character Areas
- on heritage buildings (Part IV)

Official Plan Reference

2.2.3 Avenues: Reurbanizing Arterial Corridors
Policies: 3 c) v)

3.1.2 Built Form
Policies: 3 a)

3.1.5 Heritage Resources
Policies: 1 a), 1 b), and 2

Many buildings on Queen Street West have heritage character.

Performance Standard #19B:
Development in a Heritage Conservation District

The character and values of HCDs must be respected to ensure that the district is not diminished by incremental or sweeping change.

- Development within an HCD must adhere to the guidelines of the district (see City's guidelines: www.toronto.ca/heritage-preservation/heritage_districts.htm)
- New mid-rise development will be permitted in HCDs, as per the allowances in the individual HCD plans.
- Where they are in place, HCDs shall prevail if there is a conflict.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.5 Heritage Resources
Policies: 1 a), 1 b), and 2

Performance Standard #19C:
Development Adjacent to Heritage Properties

Development adjacent to heritage properties should be sensitive to, and not negatively impact, heritage properties.

- Mitigation measures must be taken to ensure the heritage properties are respected and not negatively impacted.
- New developments must not diminish the cultural heritage values or physical materials and identified attributes of the heritage property.
- Impacts to the perception of the heritage properties or its prominence within an existing context should be minimized.
- Sight lines and views to identified landmarks should not be encroached upon by new developments.

Rationale

Individual Avenue Character Area Maps in Appendix A identify the designated heritage properties along the Avenues. Certain Avenues have a higher concentrations of these properties than others, but all heritage properties must be considered where redevelopment is adjacent to these properties.

Most areas within the City have not been subject to a systematic survey of heritage resources and the City's heritage inventory is continually being updated. For the most recent heritage properties, the City's Heritage Preservation Services should be contacted.

This guideline will ensure that existing heritage properties are protected and considered through redevelopment of the Avenues.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.5 Heritage Resources
Policies: 1 a), 1 b), and 2

Example of a listed heritage property on an Avenue: 614 Eglinton Avenue West: Forest Hill Fire Hall and Police Station, 1932; G.A. Bachman and A. Wilson, architects; two storey eastern wing, Forsey Page and Steele, architects, 1937; two storey eastern addition, J.G. Sutherland.

Performance Standard #19D:
Character Area: Fine Grain Fabric

New mid-rise buildings in Character Areas that have a fine-grain main street fabric should be designed to reflect a similar rhythm of entrances and multiple retail units.

- Vertical articulation should generally be consistent with the rhythm of adjacent main street buildings or façades.
- The street wall of buildings on the Avenues should be designed to create a comfortable yet highly animated pedestrian environment utilizing a rhythm of multiple retail frontages architecturally articulated through materials, numerous entrances, display windows, canopies and signage.

Rationale

The fine grain fabric found on these Avenues is a result of narrow lot patterns, generally not wider than 6 metres. The fabric of Toronto's main streets is part of what makes the Avenues so special. New buildings within a Character Area must seek to maintain this rhythm and fabric at grade and within the lower storeys that impact the public realm.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form

Policies: 1 a), 3 a), and 4

Typical main street fabric in Toronto's Old City.

Examples of new mid-rise buildings that create a fine grain ground floor façade.

Performance Standard #19E:
Character Area: Consistent Cornice Line

Buildings in a Character Area should maintain a consistent cornice line for the first step-back by establishing a "datum line" or an average of the existing cornice line.

- This front step-back for mid-block conditions should be a minimum of 1.5 metres and reference the average cornice line.
- This front step-back for corner conditions should be a minimum of 1.5 metres and continue the adjacent cornice line.

Rationale

New buildings that maintain and reference the existing cornice line of a predominant main street fabric will be better integrated into their Character Area context.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form

Policies: 1 a) and 3 a)

Examples of mid-rise buildings that have maintained a consistent cornice line with the surrounding built form context.

Performance Standard #19F:
Character Area: Vertical Additions

Additions to existing buildings are an alternative to redevelopment projects on the Avenues, and should be encouraged in areas with an existing urban fabric.

- Additions will not exceed the overall maximum height for the site.
- Additions should fit within the permitted envelope (i.e. will meet all angular plane provisions outlined in the Performance Standards).
- Vertical additions should adhere to the Performance Standards that address façade articulation.
- Additions should not be more than 50% of the existing building height.

Rationale

Avenues that are within Character Areas may be appropriate places for alternative forms of reurbanization or intensification, such as reuse of existing buildings, small scale infill and building additions.

By designing appropriate vertical additions, the existing fabric of the street is maintained and a more modest scale of intensification is achieved.

Where vertical additions are located on top of heritage buildings, their visual impact should be minimized through angular planes and the use of compatible and/or complementary materials.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.5 Heritage Resources
Policies: 8 b), and 8 f)

Reurbanization and intensification may be accommodated through vertical additions to existing buildings on the Avenues.

Performance Standard #19G:
Character Area: Other Considerations

Additional "context sensitive" design and massing guidelines should be considered for development in Character Areas, including:

- Use of compatible building materials
- Consider the character & placement of existing signage
- Use of front and side step-backs to mitigate different building heights
- Minimize the height of blank walls
- Ground floor heights/characteristics of character or heritage buildings should also inform new development to enhance the pedestrian realm

Rationale

The Character Area descriptions contained in Appendix A provide a general summary of the individual Character Areas and some of their important characteristics. Key context sensitive design opportunities should be considered within Character Areas.

City Staff will work closely with developers to ensure that mid-rise building design in Character Areas is appropriate to the context.

Official Plan Reference

3.1.2 Built Form
Policies: 3 a) and 4

Example of complementary materials used in a modern building adjacent to a historic building. [15,16]

Section 4: Recommendations

4.1

Introduction

Relatively few mid-rise buildings have been developed on Toronto's Avenues to-date. The existing zoning does not always permit mid-rise buildings on the Avenues and can create a lengthy and expensive approvals process that has been identified as a major obstacle by the development community. There is a need to update zoning on the Avenues to be consistent with Official Plan policies, and implement a process that will encourage developers to build more and better mid-rise buildings. The following section recommends the implementation of the Performance Standards either through zoning or urban design guidelines, as well as other recommendations effecting City policies and processes. This section summarizes these recommendations.

4.2

Implementing the Performance Standards

To realize the vision for the Avenues, updated zoning is required. As of right zoning will shorten the process which presently discourages mid-rise development on Avenues and will provide certainty to both the development community and public. Zoning which reflects the recommended Performance Standards from Section 3 of this document will provide greater certainty and will help catalyze mid-rise reurbanization on the Avenues.

4.2.1 As-of-Right Zoning

The development community has cited "certainty in the process" as an important factor in creating the conditions that will catalyze mid-rise building development in Toronto. The time and costs associated with obtaining approvals in the context of zoning that is out-of-date with the Official Plan can be lengthy and considerable enough to dissuade developers from considering mid-rise building development as viable. As a result, the development community has recently focused its attention on either low-rise townhouse projects which may fall within the existing zoning permissions or high-rise projects which involve the same costly approvals process as mid-rise projects - but costs can be better absorbed within these larger projects. When initiating a project requires an Avenue Segment Study and rezoning a property, mid-rise developments on the Avenues is considered a high risk - low return proposition.

Through new as-of-right zoning, the City can provide a positive environment to the development community by removing this uncertainty. Developers will be able to develop projects of a size that, while moderate compared to high-rise projects, can be designed, approved, built and marketed in a straightforward and profitable manner. As-of-right zoning will provide a higher level of certainty to the development process and will mitigate the inherent risks associated with any development project. Developers working within this regulatory environment will now know how much they can build and general timeframes for approvals. By forgoing the rezoning process, the benefit to developers will be a significantly reduced approvals timeframe, if development is built within the new as-of-right permissions.

The adoption of as-of-right mid-rise zoning across the applicable Avenues should alleviate bottlenecks in the approvals process. It would create an incentive for developers to develop mid-rise buildings not only in the established market areas but also along the outlying Avenues.

4.2.2 Character Areas

As part of this study, the Consultant Team undertook a Character Area study which looked closely at the different built, natural and cultural characteristics that define the City's diverse and varied Avenues. Section 2.3.1 identifies these Character Areas and suggests how they should be treated, and Appendix A provides a summary of the historical context of each of the Character Areas that overlap with the Avenues. This study recommends that development within Character Areas should respond to the unique features of the area – both those that have been identified in a preliminary way through the Character Area Study and Character Area Performance Standards (19A - G) and through further consideration at the time of application.

To ensure that developments contextually fit with the various characteristics found along the Avenues, this Study recommends an addition to the Site Plan submission requirements for buildings within Character Areas. Following a preliminary meeting with City Planning Staff, developers (owners, architects) should be asked to submit a brief narrative - "Character Area Response Statement" that outlines how the design integrates with or reflects important elements of the existing or planned context. The Character Area summaries may provide a basis for this. This statement should accompany drawings submitted for the Site Plan Review Process.

The intent is not to create an onerous process, but to encourage the applicant to consider how a mid-rise building will "fit" within the context of an area.

4.3

Official Plan

The City's Official Plan review will commence in 2011. This study involved an examination of the Avenues identified in the Official Plan Map 2 - Urban Structure. During the Official Plan review, opportunities to strengthen and expand the Avenues policies should be considered, including the potential to amend existing designations if they are inconsistent with the function and vision of the Avenues.

4.3.1 Reconsidering the Avenues

While the scope of the Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study does not include recommendations for amendments to existing Avenues' land use designations, certain areas and/or policies should be reviewed during the City's statutory Official Plan review.

- Transit service has an impact on growth and vice versa. As described earlier in this document, there are only certain land use designations on the Avenues that are identified for growth, and others, such as Neighbourhoods, are not intended for intensification. With the potential phase-in of future Transit City routes, the land use designations along the Avenues may need to be reconsidered. For example, there are significant stretches of Eglinton Avenue West and Lakeshore Boulevard West, that are currently designated as Neighbourhoods. Certain segments of these Transit City routes contain single family houses, with multiple driveways along the street. The City should review how those segments could be intensified within the Neighbourhoods land use designation or consider a new land use designation for those areas.
- A number of Transit City routes have been identified, for example, Jane Street and Finch Avenue West, that are not currently identified as an Avenue in the Official Plan Map 2 - Urban Structure. These routes may become important locations for intensification, and should be studied to see if intensification is warranted.
- The implementation of Transit City will effect the public realm on Avenues where a dedicated LRT line will be located. The City will need to widen sidewalks on these streets to ensure the safety and comfort of pedestrians using these dedicated routes. Further study should be undertaken to determine where setbacks, in addition to those proposed in this study, will be required along Transit City lines.
- Avenue Segment Studies should not be required for Avenues or portions of the Avenues that receive as-of-right zoning as a result of this study.

4.4

City Administration & Processes

Implementation of updated Avenues zoning and design guidelines requires a concerted effort from City Staff, in all Divisions, to adopt a holistic city-wide system for public education, development application review and approval for mid-rise buildings. Such a system could reduce the approvals time for applicants, which has been identified as a major barrier to mid-rise development.

4.4.1 Mid-Rise Interdivisional Team

The City should extend the mandate of the Mid-Rise Interdivisional Team (MRIT) to address the lengthy rezoning and Site Plan approval process. Developers have indicated that this process can take up to eighteen months which is generally just as long as the process for a tall building. A dedicated MRIT, that is familiar with the challenges developers face when developing mid-rise projects, could help identify ways in which to shorten the process. The MRIT will be most effective if the review period is kept to a minimum, thereby shortening the timelines currently experienced by developers.

An application that meets the Performance Standards (zoning and urban design guidelines) should move through the Site Plan process quickly. If developers are provided certainty in the process and the knowledge that they will have a reduced wait time for approvals, they will be more inclined to develop according to City standards. To facilitate an on-going efficient approvals process, it is recommended that the MRIT created to facilitate this Study be permanently established as a review mechanism for all future Avenues mid-rise applications. The final decision whether an application generally meets the mid-rise Performance Standards should be that of the Chief Planner or his/her designate.

The MRIT is comprised of representatives from the following divisions/departments:

- Affordable Housing Office
- City Planning
- Corporate Finance
- Deputy City Manager's Office, DARP Team
- Economic Development, Culture & Tourism
- Facilities & Real Estate
- Fire Services
- Legal Services
- Municipal Licensing & Standards
- Office of the Mayor
- Parks, Forestry & Recreation
- Social Development, Finance and Administration
- Solid Waste Management
- Technical Services
- Toronto Building
- Toronto Association of Business Improvement Districts
- Toronto Community Housing Corporation
- Toronto Parking Authority
- Toronto Transit Authority
- Toronto Water
- Transportation Services

The recommended Avenues mid-rise development application process envisioned would be as follows:

- After preliminary review by City Planning Staff, issues of site plan control should be dealt with through a 'sitting' of the MRIT, augmented when necessary, by the Design Review Panel.
- Projects meeting the Performance Standards but requiring minor deviations or amendments to ensure viability, may employ the Compliance Alternatives or develop other acceptable alternatives that reflect the intent of the standards.

The MRIT could be empowered as a functional unit to:

a) expedite the review and approval of Avenues mid-rise building applications;
b) expedite acceptable minor amendments, for example, forward a 'recommendation to approve' letter to the Committee of Adjustment where applications meet the intent of the Performance Standards but not the letter of the zoning. The Design Review Panel may serve as a resource to assist the MRIT where issues of design require a minor amendment;
d) create and adopt additional compliance alternatives that can act as templates for applications on constrained sites; and,
e) assist the City in seeking amendments and compliance alternatives to provincial boards and agencies.

However, proposals that seek significant exemptions to the height and angular plane provisions of the Performance Standards will not have access to this expedited approvals process and will be required to follow the regular planning process, that may require rezoning.

4.4.2 Design Review Panel

The Design Review Panel is suggested as a means of assisting applicants and the MRIT in its review of applications – particularly where issues of design become obstacles in the site plan review process or where innovative design concepts do not comply with the Performance Standards. The Design Review Panel would assist in promoting high-quality design and creating a design-culture for the Avenues that embraces innovation and sustainability.

The City has updated their 'mandate' for the Design Review Panel to include qualified projects on the Avenues:

2) The application is located along an "Avenue", as identified in OP Map 2, and contains significant public realm impacts as a result of its location, scale, form or architectural quality; and
3) The application is for a mid-rise or tall building, shopping and leisure complex, or mixed use scheme and is located along a Transit Priority route as identified in OP Map 4 and Map 5.

(See the City's website: http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-24383.pdf)

4.4.3 Site Plan Approvals Process

The City should utilize Official Plan Amendment 66 to secure high-quality building materials and streetscapes. Submissions for the Site Plan Approvals process should include 1:50 scale detailed building elevations to ensure quality of design and begin discussions with the City.

4.5

Other Recommendations

A series of other recommendations have been developed through this process, and are outlined below.

4.5.1 Compliance Alternatives

Many, if not most, of the challenges for mid-rise buildings on the Avenues arise as a result of the smaller sites typical of mid-rise development, which do not enjoy the economies of scale of larger sites. Certain municipal and provincial regulations also work against mid-rise solutions, such as the parking and loading requirements of the zoning bylaw and provisions of the Ontario Building Code which further add costs to construction. Furthermore, some smaller sites have size and access constraints which negatively impact the efficiency of the construction process (especially parking, loading and staging). The economic viability of these smaller projects can also be negatively impacted by a long and complex approvals process. This indicates a need for the City to recognize the constraints inherent to many Avenue sites and develop a series of compliance alternatives that developers can refer to when traditional solutions are not possible.

The Mid-Rise Interdivisional Team responsible for reviewing Site Plan submissions for all mid-rise projects on the Avenues, will enable the City's divisions to be familiar with the acceptable compliance alternatives for issues like parking and loading.

As part of this Study, a series of Compliance Alternatives have been recommended that can be applied when reviewing development applications that do not meet the precise requirements of City regulations. These are currently under review by the City.

Some of the compliance alternatives are derived from past projects that have been approved using acceptable alternative solutions. They should act as a resource for all City divisions and departments included in the application review and approvals process.

Examples of some of the proposed compliance alternatives include:

- Permitting laneway loading or garbage pickup, or shared loading between buildings could be considered as an alternative for mid-rise buildings. Currently, standard loading and garbage pickup methods are sometimes not feasible on mid-rise sites on the Avenues. Enforcement of such methods often results in major negative impacts on the ground floor and upper floor layouts of the buildings, and reduces the economic and construction viability of the structures.
- Innovative solutions for parking, including stackers or car elevators; and
- Changes to the parking requirements on the Avenues such as eliminating the requirement for on-site visitor parking; provision of car-sharing spaces in lieu of resident spaces; and eliminating any parking requirements for retail or office uses (up to a maximum size of retail or office unit).

The compliance alternatives for parking, loading and servicing would still require a minor variance if they do not meet the zoning by-law.

To be of the most benefit to developers and architects, the compliance alternatives should be made available at the early stages of review and as soon as it is determined that a development will have difficulty achieving typical City standards.

4.5.2 Parking Requirements

The Avenues are generally located to coincide with a good level of transit service, thereby reducing dependency on cars in many locations. Parking constraints for mid-rise buildings need to be holistically examined along the Avenues. The City should be able to lower the parking and visitor requirements for new development if developers can justify that they can meet their parking needs in creative ways (e.g. adjacent to subway or LRT stations, auto share opportunities, sharing parking between commercial and residential uses on the same site, or using surplus parking in existing developments).

4.5.3 Bicycle Parking Requirements

Development on the Avenues should encourage cycling as a primary mode of transportation. The creation of ample and convenient bicycle parking will help to encourage this.

Where retail units require bicycle parking, bicycle posts in the adjacent public realm should be counted towards the bike parking requirements.

4.5.4 Indoor Amenity Space Requirements

Many of the Avenues have a high level of community and public-oriented services such as community centres, fitness facilities, parks, religious and cultural centres, among other similar uses.

The City's requirement for indoor amenity space can be prohibitive, and reduce the leasable floor space that is better suited to public uses such as retail. There should be some flexibility built into the requirements.

The amenity space required for mid-rise developments, particularly small mid-rise buildings with few units, can be an obstacle. The City should consider whether amenity spaces that are currently required in each individual building (e.g. fitness or meeting rooms), would be better allocated to more public improvements such as cash in-lieu or improvements to nearby community centres or other similar amenities.

A potential solution to this could be for developers to submit something similar to a "Community Services Report" (as required in Avenue Segment Studies) that outline the existing amenities in the area that would meet the needs of future development.

4.5.5 Outdoor Amenity Space Requirements

The Avenues are often close to parks, and other outdoor spaces. Often the Avenues themselves are the "public amenities". Rather than providing outdoor amenity space as a part of small mid-rise developments, specifically in areas with an abundance of park space nearby, developers could provide cash in-lieu of providing outdoor amenity space on-site, or contribute to local streetscaping enhancements.

4.5.6 Ontario Building Code Issues

Mid-rise buildings on the Avenues often fall just above certain thresholds of size and height identified in the Ontario Building Codes. Buildings above 600 square metres in building area and three storeys in height fall under the more stringent Part 3 of the code (rather than Part 9 which governs low-rise buildings and allows lower-cost combustible construction techniques to be used). There are also thresholds at 18 and 36 metre heights that require additional life and fire safety measures to be incorporated into the building, both of which can affect mid-rise buildings as defined by this study.

Given the relatively small scale of mid-rise buildings on the Avenues, the life and safety requirements often add up to a "belt and suspenders" approach that is costly without providing much measurable improvement to life and fire safety. A new requirement for installation of sprinklers in residential buildings (including mixed-use structures that include retail and/or office uses) comes into effect in 2010. Sprinklers will aid in early fire suppression and reduce need for duplication of measures.

The City of Toronto Building Department has indicated that they are open to considering compliance alternatives that would reduce the cost burden on mid-rise buildings with respect to certain requirements of the Ontario Building Code. Many mid-rise buildings on the Avenues could be expected to be located in close proximity to a fire station, and should be provided with smoke and heat detectors that have a direct connection to a central fire alarm and to the fire department. Given these factors and the additional fire suppression mechanism of sprinklers, cost-saving measures such as allowing floors to be served by one exit stair only could be considered. Such a measure would free up more valuable space for residential and retail uses and improve the efficiency of the buildings. The savings would accrue even if some additional conditions are imposed, such as maximum distances between suite entry door and stairwell; requiring all units to have balconies or other places of refuge; and specifying a maximum building height based on the height that a ladder truck or other rescue vehicles could safely access.

Additionally, the Province of British Columbia has recently amended their building code to allow buildings up to six storeys to be built with wood frame construction. If Ontario were to make a similar change to its building code, this would provide further incentive to developers to develop mid-rise buildings up to 6 storeys, as it provides an opportunity to use a less expensive method of construction.

Refer to the following Ontario Building Code sections:

- For exiting refer to section *3.4.2.1 Minimum Number of Exits*
- For wood frame construction up to six storeys for residential and commercial uses, refer to sections *3.2.2.43 Group C, up to 6 Storeys* and *3.2.2.51 Group D up to 6 Storeys, Sprinklered*

4.5.7 Areas for Further Study

Through our review of the Avenues, it is obvious that the corridors are vastly different. The character and function can differ even between blocks on the same Avenue. The recommendations and Performance Standards outlined in this document are intended to be used in many, but not all, situations along the Avenues.

a. Subway Nodes & Lines

Although this study has not recommended a different treatment or height rationale for areas adjacent to, or in proximity of subway or LRT stations, previous Avenue Studies have suggested that these areas should be considered for additional height. In these Avenue Studies, proximity to a subway station has not been the only consideration for additional height, i.e. these sites (whether potential sites or current application sites) were considered based on a number of other factors (e.g. could the height transition to adjacent properties, what were the surrounding uses and form, etc). Additionally, new buildings in these areas must still fit into the surrounding context, regardless of proximity to a subway station or node.

It is therefore reasonable to consider that sites on a subway line or in proximity to a subway or LRT station may have a different set of standards. These sites should be considered on an individual basis or become priorities for future Avenue Studies.

b. Very Large Sites

Similar to the subway areas described above, very large sites, or sites that are so large they require new streets and blocks, have so far been treated differently in both Avenue Studies and through approved applications. For example, the Bloor-Dundas Avenue Study identified one site that was over 250 metres deep and bordered by a rail line at the rear, and was identified as being an appropriate location for buildings that were wider than the R.O.W. provided they were setback from the street. A recent development application for Sheppard Avenue East on a site that is approximately 150 metres deep was also approved for a taller building because of the separation distance and ability to fit within an angular plane from the rear.

These sites should be considered on an individual basis or become priorities for future Avenue Studies.

c. Sites Adjacent to Utilities

Similar to subway nodes and lines and very large sites, sites that border utilities may also be considered under a different set of built form standards. These sites may have utilities that “buffer” development from surrounding neighbourhoods by physical elements or separation such as rail lines, wide hydro corridors, or other similar features. These features often result in very wide distances between the rear of a site and existing developments, providing adequate separation distances.

These sites should be considered on an individual basis or become priorities for future Avenue Studies.

d. Eglinton Avenue West (between Martin Grove & Jane Street)

This portion of Eglinton Avenue West is the only segment of an Avenue that has a 45 metre R.O.W. width. As noted in Section 2.2, most of the Avenues fall between 20 and 36 metre R.O.W.s. Using the recommendations presented in Performance Standard 1, a 45 metre R.O.W. could result in a maximum building height of 14 – 15 storeys. As this falls outside of the typical mid-rise definition, this study has not dealt specifically with a 45 metre R.O.W. Given that this is an extremely wide R.O.W., there is potential for taller buildings that could be massed to have an appropriate transition to the street.