

Toronto Mayoralty Campaign – 2023 Transformation

The Three Immediate Actions Needed to
Support Increased Housing Supply



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Three Immediate Changes Needed to Increase Housing Supply



Development on Arterial Roadways

Expand and encourage development on arterial roadways across the city – up to 8 storeys on minor arterials and 15 storeys on major arterials, as of right.



Allow Above – Grade Parking

Permit and expand options with respect to incorporating above – grade parking into new development sites.



Remove Floor Plate Restrictions

Updating Toronto Tall Building Design Guidelines to remove the restrictive and arbitrary floor plate restriction of 750m² / 8,000 ft² which hampers the optimization of new housing construction.

A photograph of a city street at night. In the foreground, a tram is moving along the road, its lights blurred. In the background, several modern high-rise buildings are illuminated, with their windows glowing. The sky is dark, and streetlights are visible. The image is partially obscured by a large white circular graphic on the right side of the slide.

As-of-Right Zoning Along Arterial Roadways

Without as-of-right zoning, current out-of-date official plans force builders to go through an extremely lengthy zoning by-law amendment application every time they build on arterial roadways, averaging 34 months per application.

Due to antiquated zoning by-laws that only allow three storeys on arterial roadways, a builder must not only go through the already long approvals process; they must also get a zoning by-law amendment approved by the City council. Even worse, every building across the same arterial roadway must obtain a zoning by-law amendment approved by City Council.

To facilitate and encourage development on arterial roadways across the city, Council must amend their 3 story limit to 8 storeys on minor arterials and 15 storeys on major arterials using as-of-right zoning.

How As-of-Right Zoning would help?

1. Avoids the extremely lengthy 34 month process of getting a zoning by law amendment every time a building is planned on an arterial roadway.
2. Limits the financial challenges that builders face while waiting for approvals.
3. Increases density in arterial roadways.
4. Increases housing supply in the City.



Disadvantages of Below-Grade Parking

1. **Cost has rapidly increased** over the last decade – an excess of \$100,000 per parking stall in downtown Toronto exacerbated by:
 - New electrical vehicle charging requirements
 - Foundation Drainage Policy implemented in 2022 necessitating watertight construction of below-grade.
2. From an environmental, social, and governance (ESG) lens, pushing new developments to build below-grade parking as opposed to above-grade is **not conducive to meeting TransformTO and Toronto Green Standard policy objectives** of reducing greenhouses (GHG) emissions as it **has a greater notable environmental impact.**

Advantages of Above-Grade Parking

1. Much **LESS complex and time consuming**
 - Above-grade can **fast track** the construction of new high-rise **housing projects by 9–12 months**
2. Requires less deep excavations, shoring, heavy earthworks and exorbitant material haulage, hence **reducing greenhouse emissions.**
3. **Enables future repurposing options** (specifically as mobility, transit, and vehicle ownership models evolve overtime).



Amending the Tall Building Guidelines Regarding Floor Plates

Current **Tall Building Design Guidelines (2013)** limit the building floor plates to **750 m²**, whereby floor plates is described as the total area of a floor including area occupied by balconies.

Floor plate restriction was introduced to theoretically minimize shadow impacts, minimize loss of sky view from the public realm and diminish the overall scale of the building mass. Living in a major metropolitan center carries the unavoidable likelihood that the public realm will be impacted by shadows cast from tall buildings.

The Issue

There is no technical or analytical reasoning as to why the guidelines landed on the **750m² floor plate area**, which has proven to be seemingly **arbitrary and restrictive, limiting creativity and innovation**.

The 750m² floor plate criteria has **forced smaller units and sometimes irregular unit designs**, also causing so many new buildings in Toronto to all look too similar. One of the key reasons that **older apartment buildings in Toronto have larger rooms than contemporary towers was the flexibility to choose suitable floor plate areas**.

Floor plate restrictions **unfairly target residential towers** whereas commercial and office towers can have larger floor plates of 1400 m² and up.

Benefits of Amending Guidelines

More residential buildings with creative architectural design and character

Larger apartment units

Less point towers