

Duplexes on Standard-Sized Lots

Draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan

What's proposed?

- Support duplexes on typical-size residential lots of at least 15m (50') width and 550m² (6,000 sq. ft.)
- Duplexes may be designed as side-by-side, front-to-back, or up-down duplexes.
- Current duplex zoning limits above-grade floorspace to approximately 1,500 sq.ft. per unit
- Require buildings to be setback in the front and rear with landscaped open space consistent with existing building patterns and maintaining street trees.
- Encourage re-use and conversion to duplex of heritage buildings
- One on-site parking space for each unit (current parking standards) which may be located in front, to the side, or to the rear of the building
- Maintain maximum above-grade building size compatible with current duplex zoning
- Where buildings of heritage merit exists, conversion of an existing home to a duplex is encouraged rather than demolition.
- Suites would not be permitted in duplexes on typical-sized residential lots.
- Heritage designated or registered houses should be retained. New units may be considered where consistent with the City's existing House Conversion Regulations.
- A house conversion (retaining and adapting the existing house) is preferred to construction of a new duplex for other houses assessed to have heritage merit.

What's different from existing policy?

- Currently duplexes are supported only on larger, "plus-sized" lots (at least 18m/60 ft. wide), although there are examples of recently approved duplexes on smaller-sized lots. The draft neighbourhood plan proposes reducing the size of lots suitable for duplexes to 15m (50') width and 550m² (6,000 sq. ft.)
- The Official Community Plan currently supports duplexes up to 2 storeys throughout traditional residential areas. The draft neighbourhood plan proposes duplexes up to 2 storeys, and 2 ½ storey where there is no habitable basement.
- The density of duplexes would be reduced from 1.0 floor space ratio in the OCP to 0.75.
- The plan proposes updating the *Neighbourliness Guidelines for Duplexes*, which function as a bylaw regulating the design of duplexes, to reflect new duplex policies in the draft plan. This would include ensuring duplexes on narrow lots present a friendly face to the street, are designed sensitively to adjacent lots, contain on-site landscaped open space and support canopied street trees.

Benefits and tradeoffs

The draft plan will increase the number of lots that would be suitable for duplexes. Duplexes:

- May be more affordable than new single-family homes on the same land area.
- Duplexes without rental suites do not add significantly to affordability compared to existing houses.
- May incentivize the demolition of existing homes, but policy encourages the conversion of existing homes (with the addition of living space) where these homes have heritage merit.
- Provide more sustainable compact living options.
- Support the addition of larger units (3+ bedrooms) with access to open space (yard/patio) on-site.
- Provide more choice for how landowners develop their property
- Provide parking on-site but may add to use of on-street parking.
- Require careful design to minimize impacts of driveways and on the streetscape and yards.

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What could this look like?



Illustrative examples of duplexes.

