Presentation Outline

1. Toronto’s Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings
2. Performance Standards
3. Study Outcomes
The Study

City of Toronto with
Brook McIlroy Planning + Urban Design/Pace Architects
E.R.A. Architects
Quadrangle Architects
Urban Marketing Collaborative

Study Purposes:
1. Implement the Official Plan
2. Expedite development along the Avenues
3. Standardize “Best Practices” from Avenue Studies to-date
4. Encourage development of more & better-designed Mid-Rise Buildings
The total length of all the City’s Avenues is 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.
The Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study

Objectives of the Study:

a) Identifying characteristics of appropriate growth while recognizing the importance of protecting neighbourhoods

b) Identifying a mid-rise built form appropriate for different conditions

c) Recommending amendments to City’s regulatory framework - Zoning By-laws and Urban Design Guidelines based on Performance Standards

d) Recommending changes to City processes and procedures – e.g. development application review

e) Categorizing the Avenue segments where growth is encouraged
Consultation

- Interviews with developers and architects
- Interdivisional Team – e.g. Affordable Housing Office, Fire Services, Legal Services, Parks, Forestry & Recreation, Solid Waste Management, Toronto Parking Authority, Transportation Services, etc.
- Workshops and meetings with Core Team (planning & urban design staff)
- Public sessions in each of the four Districts
- Staff held meetings with Councillors
The Avenues Vision

• New businesses & residents
• Well framed, beautiful tree-lined streets
• Improved transit
• Multiplicity of at-grade uses
• Re-energized streets
• Streetscape & public realm investments
• Vibrant community life

Mid-rise buildings are the most appropriate development form for growth on Toronto’s Avenues.
Mid-Rise Buildings

How mid-rise building heights are determined:

- 1:1 building height to R.O.W. width ratio (maximum)
- Most Avenues fall within 20, 27, 30 or 36m R.O.W. width
- 10.5 metre & 3-storey minimum height
- 3 -11 storeys
- Number of storeys varies with building use
The Case for Mid-Rise Urbanism

- Iconic cities associated with a mid-rise built form
- This form is embraced by popular culture
- Includes the avenues of London, Paris, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Barcelona, and Milan
- Appropriate form for neighbourhood centres
Some Performance Standards will form the basis of new Zoning By-laws and some will be implemented as Urban Design Guidelines.
Maximum Allowable Height

- Maximum height of buildings will be equal to the width of the Avenue (R.O.W. width)
- Maximum height may only be achieved if the built form demonstrates compliance with all applicable Performance Standards
Minimum Building Height & Street Wall

• All new buildings on the Avenues must achieve a minimum height of 10.5 metres (up to 3 storeys) at the street frontage
Front Angular Plane

- Up to a maximum of 80% of the R.O.W. width
- 45 degree angle above that
Front Angular Plane - Sunlight on Sidewalks

East-west street on March 21\textsuperscript{st} – 11:00 – 4:00

North-south street on Sept. 21\textsuperscript{st}:
9:00 – 2:00
Pedestrian Perception Zones & “Human Scale”

In addition to step-backs at the top of mid-rise buildings…

• Buildings taller than 6 storeys should have a “Pedestrian Perception” step-back, to mitigate the impact of height
Rear Transition to Neighbourhood

- 45-degree angular plane taken from the property line at-grade - This is more restrictive than the MCR & could be used for Neighbourhood & Open Space adjacencies (deep lots)

- The rear transition between an Avenue property and a Neighbourhood should use the MCR regulations (shallow lots)

45-degrees from grade (deep property)
Rear Transition to Neighbourhood

East-west street on March 21st – 11:00 – 4:00

North-south street on Sept. 21st: 9:00 – 2:00
Angular Planes & Shadows
Front Façade Alignment

- Mid-rise buildings should define a street wall (minimum height 10.5 metres) by generally building to the front property line or applicable setback lines
Minimum Sidewalk Zones

- Mid-rise buildings may be required to be setback at-grade to provide a minimum sidewalk zone
  - 20 - 30m R.O.W.s should provide min. sidewalk dimension of 4.8m
  - R.O.W.s greater than 30m should provide min. sidewalk dimensions of 6m
  - Avenues on Transit City routes may require additional setbacks
Side Property Setbacks & Upper Storey Step-backs

• The base of Mid-Rise buildings should be built to the side property lines.
• Upper storeys should step-back:
  – To increase sky-views and sunlight access to the sidewalk
  – “Porous” street walls are encouraged above the 10.5m street wall
Side Property Setbacks

- Side property setbacks may be required where adjacent properties have openings/windows.
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.
- Streetscape design is guided by the City of Toronto Streetscape Manual which addresses the five main elements of the street - paving, street trees, medians, lighting and street furniture.
Residential Uses At-Grade

- Where ground floor residential uses are permitted fronting onto the Avenue, design standards are required including setbacks, raised ground floors & landscape buffers.
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 facades.
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.
New development on the Avenues should be sensitively integrated with heritage buildings and within the context of Heritage Conservation Districts.
Typical downtown Avenue - today
Typical downtown Avenue - interim
Typical downtown Avenue – long term
Implementation Tools

Recommendations

• Updated zoning and guidelines from the Performance Standards
• Review the Official Plan’s Avenues, review Land Uses
• Design Review Panel should review all Avenue developments

Implementation tools should:

• Provide incentives for achieving mid-rise buildings on the Avenues
• Expedite the review and approval process
• Create better certainty for developers and for the public
Thank you

www.toronto.ca/planning/midrisestudy.htm