



# Corporate Report

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**DATE:** June 6, 2006

**TO:** Chair and Members of Planning and Development Committee  
Meeting Date: June 26, 2006

**FROM:** Edward R. Sajecki  
Commissioner of Planning and Building

**SUBJECT:** **Proposed Interim Residential Intensification Policies**

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**RECOMMENDATION:** That a public meeting be held at the Planning and Development Committee to consider proposed amendments to Mississauga Plan as outlined in the report titled "*Proposed Interim Residential Intensification Policies*" dated June 6, 2006 from the Commissioner of Planning and Building.

**BACKGROUND:** A number of development applications proposing amendments to Mississauga Plan to allow increased residential densities have been submitted. Some of these applications do not reflect the intent of Mississauga Plan, respect the context of the surrounding community or employ sound planning principles. These applications have generated concerns related to, among other things, land use compatibility, capacity of water and wastewater systems, inadequate parking facilities, traffic congestion, lack of community services and poor urban design. Commonly, the proponent of these applications justifies the proposal as supporting provincial initiatives encouraging residential intensification.

Mississauga Plan supports the concept of residential intensification and the existing policies provide for extensive development opportunities in appropriate locations. However, increases in residential density merely for the sake of increasing density that show

no regard for the overall intent of Mississauga Plan and do not enhance the community should not be supported. Further, Provincial initiatives are based on sound planning principles and do not direct municipalities to support all intensification development applications regardless of their merit.

The last of Mississauga's greenfields are now being developed. Future additions to the City's housing stock will increasingly be provided through intensification which refers to infill and redevelopment opportunities in established neighbourhoods. This involves developing remaining vacant lands, adding additional development to underutilized sites or redevelopment proposals, often at higher densities than exists in the surrounding community.

As Mississauga continues to grow, the challenge will be to accommodate additional housing in a manner that enhances existing neighbourhoods while creating a liveable compact urban form. To prepare the City for this challenge, studies are underway regarding the best locations for additional residential development as well as the amount of additional development that should be encouraged. These studies will consider, among other matters, the needs of the existing and projected population, infrastructure capacity, financial impacts, the desired urban form of the City and provisions regarding community improvement and bonusing.

The above are complex studies that will take some time to complete. In the meantime, applications for residential development at densities higher than permitted within the existing context of Mississauga Plan have been submitted.

While Mississauga Plan does include policies regarding residential intensification, the policies need to be enhanced to provide greater direction. It is, therefore, proposed that interim residential intensification policies be adopted until the above mentioned studies have been completed. Further, amendments to the community improvement policies in Mississauga Plan are proposed. This report presents the proposed policies and amendments.

**COMMENTS:****Provincial Residential Intensification Initiatives**

Recent planning reforms, including the *Proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (November 2005), have placed considerable emphasis on intensification as a means of achieving sustainable growth. The proposed growth plan identifies Urban Growth Centres as the focus for more intensive development.

Mississauga City Centre has been identified as an Urban Growth Centre. The proposed growth plan also encourages more intensive development in proximity to major transit stations and in nodes and corridors.

Residential intensification is also a key policy area of the *Provincial Policy Statement* and is defined as:

*...intensification of a property, site or area which results in a net increase in residential units or accommodation and includes:*

- (a) redevelopment, including the redevelopment of brownfield sites;*
- (b) the development of vacant or underutilized lots within previously developed areas;*
- (c) infill development;*
- (d) the conversion or expansion of existing industrial, commercial and institutional buildings for residential use; and*
- (e) the conversion or expansion of existing residential buildings to create new residential units or accommodation, including accessory apartments, secondary suites and rooming houses.*

**Benefits of Residential Intensification**

It is recognized that compact development benefits the environment by reducing the rate at which land is consumed for residential development. In turn, this can reduce the need for roads and other impermeable surfaces that contribute to runoff and the heat island effect.

Transit-supportive densities can reduce reliance on the private automobile by making it more feasible to provide more efficient public transit service. Compact development can be more cost effective by reducing spending on new infrastructure.

Well designed compact development can create liveable and vibrant communities where there is proximity between different uses. A variety of housing forms can be achieved through more compact development to help meet the needs of a diverse population. Many of the benefits of compact development such as a cleaner environment and encouraging walking and cycling can also contribute to improvements in public health.

Because of the above benefits, existing policy planning documents support more compact growth, with the City Centre identified as the focus of residential growth. Compact development should continue to be supported, but in the locations and in a form that enhances the City.

### **Interim Residential Intensification Policies**

In order to provide greater guidance on how to deal with applications for residential intensification, interim policies as outlined in Appendix 1 have been prepared. These policies are intended to replace existing residential intensification policies found in Section 3.2.3.8 of Mississauga Plan.

#### Intensification Principles

Proposed development in established residential communities should respect and enhance existing and planned land uses. As such, the interim residential intensification policies are based on the following broad principles:

- stable neighbourhoods must be protected from inappropriate intensification;
- intensification will be focused in areas identified for and capable of supporting additional development;
- intensification must be compatible in built-form, scale and character to surrounding development;
- sufficient capacity in existing or planned community uses, human services and emergency services to meet increased demand caused by proposed intensification is required; and
- mixed use development, particularly ground-floor retail commercial in conjunction with residential uses, is encouraged, in appropriate locations.

### The Urban Growth Centre

In accordance with the *Proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (November 2005), the proposed policies identify the Mississauga Urban Growth Centre as the focus of residential intensification. No precise boundaries of Mississauga's Urban Growth Centre were delineated by the Province, however, municipalities will be required to delineate growth centre boundaries through their official plans.

The proposed boundary of the Mississauga Urban Growth Centre, shown in Appendix 2, includes all of the City Centre Planning District and portions of the Hurontario, Mississauga Valleys, Fairview and Cooksville Planning Districts. In delineating the Urban Growth Centre, an effort was made to include areas already developed or designated for medium and high density residential development and to avoid existing, stable lower density communities.

Development of the City Centre is supported by existing policies in Mississauga Plan. The development concept for the City Centre envisions it as Mississauga's downtown, a destination and a major regional centre. Extensive development has occurred and is proposed for the City Centre that supports this vision.

Development along Hurontario Street is a logical extension of development occurring in the City Centre Planning District and recognizes the intensity of development that already exists throughout the area and the capacity of several underutilized sites. The portion of Hurontario Street included in the proposed Urban Growth Centre is an active area that together with the City Centre Planning District has the capacity for creating a vital and distinctive central core for Mississauga and connecting to other nodes and corridors within the City.

Under the *Proposed Growth Plan*, Mississauga's Urban Growth Centre is required to achieve a gross density target of 200 people plus jobs per hectare (80 per acre) by the year 2031. Mississauga's Urban Growth Centre, as proposed, will be able to achieve this target and is an appropriate priority intensification area because of the presence of the following:

- a large existing population base;
- a variety of medium and high density residential forms and residential tenures;
- significant employment opportunities including an office concentration;
- a strong commercial presence, including the Square One Shopping Centre and the retail commercial uses in proximity to the intersection of Hurontario and Dundas Streets and the intersection of Hurontario Street and Eglinton Avenue;
- Cooksville and Hurontario district nodes;
- access to a wide variety of community/public services, including the Civic Centre, Living Arts Centre, the YMCA, Trillium Hospital, schools, community centres, libraries, and parks;
- several major transit corridors, including Hurontario Street;
- City Centre Transit Terminal and GO Transit commuter service, including the Cooksville GO Train station and the new Square One GO Bus terminal;
- future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service;
- planned development of higher order transit such as light rail (LRT) along Hurontario Street; and
- connections to Highway 403 and the Queen Elizabeth Way.

No redesignations of lands within the proposed Urban Growth Centre are recommended at this time. Existing designations allow for considerable development opportunities. However, applications for additional density should be considered provided they represent good development, can be supported by the existing and planned infrastructure capacity and satisfy the proposed interim residential intensification policies and other policies in Mississauga Plan.

The inclusion of small pockets of low density development within the proposed Urban Growth Centre is not intended to suggest that these areas should be redeveloped for higher density uses. Some of these areas are stable, new development or are continuations of lower density development beyond the boundaries of the proposed Urban Growth Centre. There is, however, some low density development, such as along Elm Street, where redevelopment to higher density is

envisioned and, as such, is reflected in the designation in Mississauga Plan.

#### Possible Future Expansions/Connections to the Urban Growth Centre

The portion of Hurontario Street contained within the proposed Urban Growth Centre connects to Upper Hurontario Street where major office and other employment uses are proposed. To the south, Hurontario Street terminates at Port Credit which is developing into a lively mixed use area and includes the Port Credit GO Train station.

Eventually, the entire length of Hurontario Street, from the Brampton border to Lakeshore Road may be identified as a corridor in accordance with the *Proposed Growth Plan*, however, lands to the north have not been included in the proposed Urban Growth Centre at this time because they are within the airport operating area and do not permit residential development. Additional work needs to be done to determine if the density target of 200 people plus jobs per hectare (80 per acre) could be achieved without the presence of residential development.

Lands along Hurontario Street to the south of the proposed Urban Growth Centre have been excluded because they are within the Mineola Planning District which is a stable low density residential area and residential intensification would not be appropriate without a detailed land use study for this area. This area would not achieve the density target of 200 people plus jobs per hectare (80 per acre).

The portion of Hurontario Street contained within the proposed Urban Growth Centre also connects to Eglinton Avenue, Burnhamthorpe Road and Dundas Street which are also important thoroughfares within Mississauga and have the potential of being identified as corridors in accordance with the *Proposed Growth Plan*.

#### Major Transit Stations, Nodes and Corridors

While the *Proposed Growth Plan* also encourages intensification in proximity to major transit stations (e.g., GO Transit and Bus Rapid Transit stations) and to nodes and corridors, the interim policies do not direct intensification to these areas unless they are within the boundaries of the proposed Urban Growth Centre. Studies

considering the capacity and appropriateness of residential intensification in proximity to major transit stations and in nodes and corridors are underway; however, until those studies have been completed, applications in these areas should be assessed on their individual merit and in accordance with the intent of the official plan and sound planning principles. Where development capacity has been identified, such as in proximity to some transit stations and in some nodes, the interim policies will continue to allow development to occur. Mississauga Plan does not identify corridors.

#### Outside the Urban Growth Centre

Applications for residential intensification outside of the proposed Urban Growth Centre that propose development in accordance with the existing designations and density limits in Mississauga Plan will not be considered premature. This allows for the development of vacant lands to complete existing communities.

Redevelopment of some sites where existing development is not in conformity with Mississauga Plan would also not be considered premature. For example, development applications for sites with existing industrial development that are designated for residential land uses should continue to be considered.

Further, some sites have not developed to the density permitted by Mississauga Plan. Development applications for these sites should also be considered. Sites with large areas of surface parking or landscaping where additional development capacity was identified in the review of district policies may fall into this category.

Lastly, many of the Retail Commercial policies of Mississauga Plan permit residential development, however, they do not specify any residential densities. Mixed use developments, such as ground level retail commercial uses with residential uses above, can create vibrant, active places that support transit use and encourage walking. These developments should continue to be considered, however, height restrictions are proposed to limit the demands on existing infrastructure and to ensure that the scale of development does not overwhelm surrounding communities.



Increases in density to lands outside of the proposed Urban Growth Centre may be considered provided they respect the intent of the existing policies (including these proposed interim residential intensification policies), are compatible with existing and planned development and enhance the existing community. Applications that propose intensification but cannot be justified on other planning principles, will not be supported.

#### Other Policies in Mississauga Plan

The interim policies identify additional requirements or expand upon existing policies. Notwithstanding the interim residential intensification policies, all applicable policies contained in Mississauga Plan will continue to apply to all development proposals.

#### **Community Improvement Policies**

*The Planning Act defines a Community Improvement Area as an area of a municipality, the community improvement of which in the opinion of the council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason.*

While the proposed Urban Growth Centre offers significant residential, employment and recreational opportunities, residential intensification throughout the Urban Growth Centre will place greater pressures on hard and soft services. Portions of the proposed Urban Growth Centre, such as some lands within the Cooksville Planning District, include older structures where redevelopment could occur. There are measures available to enhance the Cooksville and Mary Fix Creeks, both of which are located in the proposed Urban Growth Centre and have experienced severe alterations over many years. In addition, ensuring that the proposed Urban Growth Centre is a vibrant mixed use area requires attracting additional office development.

To achieve this and other objectives, the interim residential intensification policies are supplemented by proposed amendments to the Community Improvement policies contained in Section 5.8 and Schedule 7 of Mississauga Plan.

It is proposed that Section 5.8 be amended to include an additional criterion for the designation of a Community Improvement Area to include the following:

- (l) identification of the need to encourage office employment opportunities.

It is proposed that Schedule 7 be amended by designating the entire proposed Urban Growth Centre as a Community Improvement Area. Currently, only the lands surrounding the intersection of Hurontario Street and Dundas Street in the Cooksville Planning District are identified as a Community Improvement Area.

A Community Improvement Plan should be prepared that addresses the impediments to attracting office development and identify specific measures to support transit, provide parking facilities, improve streetscapes and encourage investment, among other matters. The study should consider financial incentives, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) that encourage development and fund community improvement initiatives.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** Not Applicable

**CONCLUSION:** Looking ahead, additions to Mississauga's housing stock will be increasingly provided through intensification opportunities. As intensification pressures increase, more detailed policies will be required to provide guidance on how to deal with applications for residential intensification.

Interim residential intensification policies have been prepared that direct intensification to the proposed Urban Growth Centre while still allowing vacant, non-conforming and underutilized lands outside the proposed Urban Growth Centre to accommodate additional residential development in accordance with the existing policies of Mississauga Plan. Applications to amend Mississauga Plan for increased residential density must be within the intent of the Plan, be based on sound planning principles and enhance the surrounding community. The interim residential intensification policies will eventually be replaced with comprehensive residential intensification policies.

In addition, to ensure a vibrant Urban Growth Centre, amendments are proposed to Mississauga Plan's community improvement policies whereby, the entire proposed Urban Growth Centre is designated a Community Improvement Area.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

APPENDIX 1: Proposed Interim Residential Intensification Policies

APPENDIX 2: Proposed Mississauga Urban Growth Centre

*Original Signed By:*

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Edward R. Sajecki  
Commissioner of Planning and Building

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Projects*

## Proposed Interim Residential Intensification Policies

### 3.2.4 Residential Intensification (Interim Policies)

Residential intensification is encouraged, subject to meeting the policies and intent of this Plan and the following additional requirements:

#### 3.2.4.2 Location

- a. The focus of intensification will be directed to the *Urban Growth Centre*, as shown on Appendix P;
- b. Intensification outside the Urban Growth Centre will occur through the development of vacant or underutilized lands in accordance with the intent of this Plan;

#### 3.2.4.3 Urban Growth Centre

- c. The *Urban Growth Centre* is planned to achieve a minimum gross density of 200 residents and jobs combined per hectare;
- d. A minimum building height of 3 storeys is required on lands designated Mixed Use, Retail Core Commercial, Mainstreet Commercial or General Commercial that are within the *Urban Growth Centre*. Where the right-of-way width exceeds 20 metres a greater building height may be required to achieve appropriate street enclosure in relation to the right-of-way width;
- e. Within the *Urban Growth Centre*, on lands designated Mixed Use, Retail Core Commercial, Mainstreet Commercial, General Commercial, Office or Convenience Commercial, ground floor retail commercial or office shall be provided;

- f. On streets within the *Urban Growth Centre* which through the processing of development applications or other studies are identified as desirable locations for active uses, ground-floor retail commercial is encouraged to achieve an animated streetscape;

#### 3.2.4.4 Outside the Urban Growth Centre

- g. Applications for residential intensification not in compliance with 3.2.4.2.b and requiring amendments to Mississauga Plan will generally be considered premature. Increases in density may be considered where the proposed development is compatible in built form and scale to surrounding development, enhances the existing or planned community and is consistent with the intent of this Plan;
- h. Where there is no restriction on the heights of buildings in the District Policies, any consideration to heights in excess of 4 storeys will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that an appropriate transition in heights that respects the surrounding context will be achieved;

#### 3.2.4.5 General Policies

- i. Development should be compatible with the scale and character of a planned residential area by having regard for the following elements:
  - i. natural environment;
  - ii. lot frontages and areas;
  - iii. street and block patterns;
  - iv. building height;
  - v. coverage;
  - vi. massing;
  - vii. architectural character;
  - viii. streetscapes;
  - ix. heritage features;
  - x. setbacks;
  - xi. privacy and overview;
  - xii. the pedestrian environment;
  - xiii. parking

- j. Development proposals will demonstrate compatibility and integration with surrounding land uses by ensuring that an effective transition in built form is provided between areas of different development densities and scale. Transition in built form will act as a buffer between the proposed development and planned uses, and should be provided through appropriate height, massing, character, architectural design, siting, setbacks, parking, and open and amenity space;
- k. The proponent of an intensification project may be required to provide a Community Uses Impact Study. A Community Uses Impact Study will, among other things, assess the proximity to and adequacy of existing community uses, human services and emergency services to meet increased demand caused by proposed intensification;
- l. Development should be located on public roads;
- m. Development applications should complete streets and existing development patterns;
- n. As part of the review of development applications, area-wide or site specific transportation studies may be required to be carried out to identify necessary transportation improvements and the need for staging to ensure that the development does not precede necessary transportation improvements. Further, additional minor collector roads and local roads may be identified during the review of development applications;
- o. The proponent of an intensification project will be required to provide a Stormwater Management Study. This study may, among other things, be required to include the following:
  - i. verification that the existing storm drainage system has the capacity to convey the increased storm flow due to intensification in accordance with current City standards;
  - ii. identification of any impact on the downstream watercourse through erosion and/or flooding;
  - iii. recommendations for any remediation works; and
  - iv. identification of the limits of allowable intensification without any unacceptable impact on both the downstream watercourse and infrastructure.
- p. The development should maintain or improve public parkland; pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular access; and linkages to surrounding neighbourhoods;
- q. The development should minimize the use of surface parking in favour of underground or aboveground structured parking. All surface parking should be screened from the street and be designed to provide for surveillance from public areas. Aboveground structured parking should be lined with residential, commercial or office uses;
- r. Shared parking is encouraged;
- s. For multiple unit development, shared access is encouraged to minimize disruption to pedestrian activity;
- t. Multiple pedestrian entries are encouraged to reduce the mass of buildings and promote pedestrian activity;
- u. Development proposals may be required to submit micro-climate studies to demonstrate how negative impacts on the public streets, public parkland, pedestrian environments and adjacent residential areas have been ameliorated with regard to the following environmental elements:
  - i. sun;
  - ii. wind;
  - iii. noise;
  - iv. light;
- v. For projects that will be phased, applications shall be accompanied by a detailed phasing plan.

