

**Subject: Urban Design Guidelines for Low-rise Infill Housing - Project Status
and Housekeeping Amendment Report**

File Number: ACS2022-PIE-RHU-0022

Report to Planning Committee on 23 June 2022

and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee on 30 June 2022

and Council 6 July 2022

**Submitted on June 9, 2022 by Court Curry, Manager, Right of Way, Heritage and
Urban Design, Planning, Real Estate and Economic Development**

Contact Person: Christopher Moise, Planner II, Public Realm and Urban Design

613-580-2424, 24591, Christopher.Moise@ottawa.ca

Ward: Citywide

**Objet : Lignes directrices de design urbain relatives aux aménagements
résidentiels intercalaires de faible hauteur – état d’avancement du projet et
rapport sur les modifications d’ordre administratif**

Dossier : ACS2022-PIE-RHU-0022

Rapport au Comité de l’urbanisme le 23 juin 2022

et Comité de l’agricultural et des affaires rurales le 30 juin 2022

et au Conseil le 6 juillet 2022

**Soumis le 9 juin 2022 par Court Curry, gestionnaire, Services des emprises, du
patrimoine et du design urbain, Planification, Immobilier et Développement
économique**

**Personne ressource : Matthew Ippersiel, Urbaniste II, Services des emprises, du
patrimoine, et du design urbain / Services de la planification, de l’immobilier et du
développement économique Choose an item.**

613-229-7478, Matthew.Ippersiel@ottawa.ca

Quartier : À l’échelle de la ville

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That Planning Committee and Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee recommend Council:

- 1. Approve housekeeping amendments to the Urban Design Guidelines for Low-rise Infill Housing, as detailed in Document 1; and**
- 2. Receive the following report for information which outlines the second phase of the update to the Guidelines for Low-Rise Infill Housing targeted for Council approval in Q1 2023.**

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité de l'urbanisme et le Comité de l'agricultural et des affaires rurales recommandent ce qui suit au Conseil :

- 1. Approuver des modifications d'ordre administratif aux lignes directrices de design urbain relatives aux aménagements résidentiels intercalaires de faible hauteur, comme l'expose en détail le document 1; et**
- 2. Prendre connaissance du rapport suivant, à titre d'information, qui décrit la seconde phase de mise à jour des lignes directrices relatives aux aménagements résidentiels intercalaires de faible hauteur, qui doivent être approuvées par le Conseil au premier trimestre de 2023.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report recommends approval of the housekeeping update to the existing Urban Design Guidelines for Low-rise Infill Housing (Document 1) which were approved by City Council in 2012.

The proposed housekeeping amendments are the first phase in a two-phase review and update to the existing guidelines. The housekeeping amendments are recommended to ensure the guidelines are reflective of the general intent of the New Official Plan as adopted by City Council on November 24, 2021. The amended guidelines would remain in effect until such time as the updated guidelines are adopted in 2023 following the anticipated Ministerial approval of the New Official Plan.

An update to the Urban Design Guidelines for Low-rise Infill Housing was proposed as part of the R4 Phase 1 Council report and included in the 2019 Council-approved Department Work Plan and was subsequently put on hold while work to complete the

New Official Plan was undertaken. Now that the New Official Plan has been completed, this work is planned to be completed by Q1 2023. This report outlines the proposed approach the update will follow over the course of the next year, including the associated consultation process.

As a first step in the process, a review of the existing Guidelines was required to ensure they are consistent with the intent and wording of the New Official Plan. This housekeeping amendment includes minor restructuring and text edits to align the current guidelines with the New Official Plan. A substantive update to these guidelines (Phase Two) will be provided to Council in Q1 2023. The final guidelines will capture all forms and scales of low-rise infill housing in all transects and will be in alignment with the City's newly proposed Comprehensive Zoning Review. The Comprehensive Zoning Review is a full review of the City's current zoning regulations with the goal of establishing a new Zoning By-law in conformity with the New Official Plan as is required by the *Planning Act*.

The content and structure of the housekeeping update remains consistent with the current guidelines.

RÉSUMÉ

Le présent rapport recommande l'approbation de la mise à jour d'ordre administratif des lignes directrices de design urbain relatives aux aménagements résidentiels intercalaires de faible hauteur (document 1), approuvées par le Conseil municipal en 2012.

Les modifications d'ordre administratif proposées correspondent à la première des deux phases prévues d'examen et de mise à jour des lignes directrices actuelles. Elles sont recommandées pour s'assurer que ces lignes directrices traduisent l'objectif général du nouveau Plan officiel, adopté par le Conseil municipal le 24 novembre 2021. Les lignes directrices modifiées resteraient en vigueur jusqu'à l'adoption de nouvelles lignes directrices en 2023, par suite de l'approbation ministérielle prévue du nouveau Plan officiel.

On a proposé de réactualiser les lignes directrices de design urbain relatives aux aménagements résidentiels intercalaires de faible hauteur dans le cadre du Rapport au Conseil sur la phase 1 du zonage résidentiel de densité 4 (R4), comme le prévoit le Plan de travail de la Direction générale, que le Conseil a approuvé; elles ont été mises en veille dans l'attente de l'achèvement du nouveau Plan officiel. Maintenant que l'élaboration du nouveau Plan officiel est terminée, cette réactualisation devrait être

achevée au premier trimestre de 2023. Le présent rapport décrit l'approche proposée pour cette réactualisation au cours de la prochaine année, y compris le processus de consultation qui l'accompagnera.

Dans un premier temps, un examen des lignes directrices actuelles a été nécessaire pour s'assurer qu'elles sont conformes à l'objectif et au libellé du nouveau Plan officiel. Cette modification d'ordre administratif comprenait une restructuration mineure et des reformulations de texte permettant de faire correspondre les lignes directrices actuelles au nouveau Plan officiel. Une mise à jour substantielle de ces lignes directrices (seconde phase) sera présentée au Conseil au premier trimestre de 2023. La version définitive des lignes directrices reflétera toutes les formes et toutes les échelles d'aménagement résidentiel intercalaire de faible hauteur dans tous les transects, et correspondra au nouvel examen complet du zonage de la Ville proposé. Cet examen complet du zonage comprend l'examen complet de toutes les règles de zonage actuelles de la Ville dans le but d'établir un nouveau Règlement de zonage conforme au nouveau Plan officiel, comme l'exige la *Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire*.

Le contenu et la structure de la mise à jour d'ordre administratif demeurent conformes aux lignes directrices actuelles.

BACKGROUND

The importance of good urban design at all scales of development is strongly encouraged and reflected both provincially and municipally. Section 2 of the *Planning Act* requires municipalities to have regard for “the promotion of built form that is well-designed, encourages a sense of place, and provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant”. The New Official Plan directs Low-rise buildings to be designed to respond to context and transect area policies, and shall include areas for soft landscaping, main entrances at-grade, front porches or balconies, where appropriate. Buildings shall integrate architecturally to complement the surrounding context.

In support of this objective, this report recommends approval of housekeeping amendments (Document 1) which propose minor modifications to the text and structure of the current guidelines to be in alignment with the terminology and general intent of the New Official Plan. This is proposed as an interim measure until such time as a more thorough review, analysis and consultative process has taken place to fully align the guidelines with the City's Comprehensive Zoning Review as two key tools to implement the New Official Plan's intensification goals.

This report is also intended to provide an update and plan to members of Council for the broader second phase of the project which will introduce new guidelines for Low-Rise Infill Housing in Q1 2023. As part of the broader review and update, consideration will be given to the several studies over the course of previous years concerning infill and intensification in the City's urbanized area, with particular focus on the inner-urban areas characterized as the "mature neighborhoods" typified by residential buildings and streetscape patterns of a pre-1950's era. As neighbourhoods have aged and turnover of buildings has occurred, concerns with respect to maintaining "neighbourhood character" and "compatibility" have been frequently expressed, in terms of how new buildings occupy their site. A number of recent planning and zoning changes have been implemented to help manage smaller infill developments however, pressures have been noted in determining how new larger low-rise non-ground-oriented buildings can coexist and contribute to the streetscape character of transitioning neighbourhoods. This includes how the architectural design, material selection, articulation, and prominence of certain elements contributes or detracts from the established character of a neighbourhood as a whole. Although larger non-ground-oriented typologies have been raised as a key issue to address, the new guidelines will also address all scales of low-rise infill housing in all transects city-wide. They will also be fully aligned with the City's Comprehensive Zoning Review to ensure that they appropriately address low-rise infill development.

The new guidelines are intended to improve specific design outcomes and raise the minimum standard for design quality to be more in line with architectural best-practices and Ottawa's status as the Capital.

The new guidelines will provide design guidance to City staff, industry, community associations, and the general public on how low-rise housing can be designed and delivered in the context of infill and intensification in the urban area of the city.

DISCUSSION

The New Official Plan

Low-rise residential buildings are the most common built-form typology expected to be built within most areas of Ottawa, particularly in areas designated as 'Neighbourhood' in the City's New Official Plan. Low-rise residential infill is anticipated in the Downtown Core, Inner Urban, Outer Urban and Suburban Transects, and may be located within established areas of serviced villages within the Rural Transect. This typology can contribute to the creation of healthy, walkable 15-minute neighbourhoods. These

buildings can add a range of housing options for all ages and income groups, including large-sized units suitable for families.

Strategic Directions

Low-rise residential infill can contribute to achieving the strategic directions outlined in Section 2 of the Official Plan and address the cross-cutting issues of “Intensification”, “Energy and Climate Change” and “Healthy and Inclusive Communities”, described in Section 2.2.

Low-rise residential infill housing will help achieve Ottawa’s intensification objectives outlined in the Growth Management section of the Official Plan, which directs most of the residential growth to occur within built up areas by 2046, and to provide ground-oriented housing options for larger households.

Low-rise residential infill supports the development of a compact and connected city and helps prioritize a shift to energy efficient transportation modes, as this development provides an opportunity for more people to live closer to existing services and amenities, including transit.

Finally, well designed low-rise residential infill contributes to a high-quality, human-scale urban design that creates a sense of place and a vibrant public realm. Low-rise residential infill supports the evolution of Ottawa’s neighbourhoods into the healthy, complete, 15-minute neighbourhood model outlined in Section 2.2.4 of the Official Plan or can reinforce mature neighbourhoods that have already evolved to include the necessary components, by adding more density and expanding housing options.

Section 6.3 of the Official Plan indicates that ‘Neighbourhoods’ are planned for “ongoing, gradual, integrated, sustainable and context sensitive development”. In areas subject to an ‘Evolving Overlay’, the gradual, well-planned transformation of these areas is supported, and Section 5.6.1.1(1b) allows for “new building forms and typologies, such as missing middle housing”, which may differ from the existing building stock of the immediate context. In accordance with the Official Plan, Section 6.3.1(3), areas designated as ‘Neighbourhood’ will generally remain low-rise, and the OP expects a full range of low-rise housing options sufficient to meet the intensification goals outlined in Table 2 and Table 3b of the Official Plan.

The design of low-rise residential infill will be important as Ottawa’s neighbourhoods evolve to meet contemporary planning challenges and the strategic directions outlined in the Official Plan.

When Are Design Guidelines Applied?

Design guidelines are a tool to help achieve the Official Plan's goals in the areas of change and intensification. They help implement Official Plan policies with respect to the review of development applications for infill development at all scales city-wide.

Infill is development that occurs on a single lot, or a consolidated number of small lots, on sites that are vacant, undeveloped or where demolition occurs. Infill may also refer to the creation of the lot or lots.

The appended housekeeping design guideline document will be applied to all low-rise infill development in the Downtown Core, Inner Urban, Outer Urban and Suburban Transects, as identified on Schedule B of the Official Plan, and also applies to infill development within serviced areas of villages in the Rural Transect. This infill may include the following residential types: single detached, semi-detached, duplex, triplex, townhouses, stacked townhouses, low-rise apartments (four units and more) and other forms of ground-oriented housing typologies that may emerge.

The design guidelines will continue to illustrate the important principles for design of the site, the building and the public realm, all of which require careful consideration through the development approvals process.

Structure of the Proposed Guidelines housekeeping changes

The guidelines (Document 1) include a total of 74 design principles/directions and a collection of photographic examples organized into seven sections: Streetscapes, Landscape, Building Design (Built Form), Parking and Garages, Heritage Building Alterations/Additions, Service Elements, and Infill on Narrow Lots (No addition or removal of sections is proposed at this time.) The following outline details both the structure of the guidelines and the associated housekeeping amendments proposed to be approved as Document 1.

Key housekeeping updates to the preamble include:

Housekeeping changes to the organization of the preamble, to come before the guideline sections, were made to reflect the organization of other current City of Ottawa design guideline formats.

- Addition of Definition and Objectives sections to align with the New Official Plan.
- All references to the previous Official Plan are replaced with references to the New Official Plan.

- Addition of a Design and Sustainability subsection.
- General wording was edited for clarity.

Section 1 - Streetscapes

This section includes guidelines which focus on the relationship and integration with the public realm which are intended to create healthy cities and quality walkable neighbourhoods.

Key housekeeping updates include:

- Minor changes in terminology to align with the New Official Plan.

Section 2 - Landscape

This section includes guidelines which direct and enhance development with a stronger connection to our urban natural environment.

Key housekeeping updates include:

- Changes in terminology introduced by the Development Review Forester to align with the New Official Plan and the Urban Forest Management Plan.
- Changes in design guideline directives to align with the New Official Plan and current best practices with respect to tree-planting, sustainability, and performance standards.

Section 3 - Building Design (Built Form)

Guidelines are included in this section, grouped into three topic areas: Siting; Mass/Height; and Architectural Style and Facades.

Key housekeeping updates include:

- Minor changes in terminology to align with the New Official Plan.
- References to transition/angular plane updated to reflect current zoning requirements.

Section 4 - Parking and Garages

These guidelines intended to preserve liveable city streets, a high-quality built environment is as important a consideration as the need for parking and servicing.

Key housekeeping updates include:

- Minor changes in terminology to align with the New Official Plan.
- Addition of language that incorporates the Zoning By-law and sets the stage for future performance standards.
- References to parking updated to reflect current zoning requirements.

Section 5 - Heritage Building Alterations/Additions

This section has guidelines which recognize that revitalizing and adding on to existing buildings is a fundamental principle of city building. However, it is noted that heritage buildings require special attention and are covered under their own legislation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Key housekeeping updates include:

- Minor changes in terminology and section references to align with the New Official Plan.

Section 6- Service Elements

This section uses guidelines to describe how services can be incorporated into the design of new development and screened from view so that they do not diminish the quality or safety of the public streetscape.

Key housekeeping updates include:

- No changes necessary.

Section 7 - Infill on Narrow Lots

This section highlights that in some neighbourhoods, the lot widths permitted by the Zoning By-law are much narrower than existing lots and, as a result, it can be more difficult to achieve a complementary fit, identifying guidelines to manage the result.

Key housekeeping updates include:

- Minor changes in terminology to align with the New Official Plan.
- Text introduced by the Development Review Forester to align with the New Official Plan and the Urban Forest Management Plan.

The Guidelines also include a Glossary section.

Note the Appendix: How Design Guidelines fit with the current Development Approval process was removed in its entirety because it is no longer applicable to the New Official Plan context and the information is correctly available on the city's website Ottawa.ca;

Key housekeeping updates include:

- Updates to terminology and definitions to reference the New Official Plan.

The guideline's role in concert with New Zoning Strategy

The role of the Zoning By-law relates most directly to managing the relationship between the quantity of development (including density) and the physical aspects of built form. Zoning set's objective and enforceable standards that buildings are required to comply with, such as yard setbacks from property lines and permitted building heights. The powers of zoning directly relate to the physical characteristics of buildings and development. The ability to establish zoning is enshrined in the *Planning Act*, and zoning by-laws are considered "applicable law" under the *Building Code Act* when considering what regulations must be complied with to obtain a building permit. Thus, zoning regulations relate directly to the Urban Design Guidelines. The design guidelines represent the standard of design that the city aspires to and will work directly with the new zoning strategy to assist in setting the standards for well designed infill development the city is seeking.

Low-rise Infill Housing Guidelines Phase Two

In phase two the existing guidelines will be further developed with the aim of providing more directed and implementable strategies for overcoming many of the concerns that arise through the development process related to a variety of detailed elements of an infill development proposal. The new guidelines will be more illustration-centred to help identify common concerns and provide options for how to mitigate them. The following questions will direct the review and focus on solutions:

- What does design compatibility mean and how do we understand the 'context' of a development?
- What elements in the design of low-rise housing contribute to neighbourhood compatibility? What building and site design elements are most problematic/concerning for neighbourhood compatibility?
- How will the guidelines address questions of the “missing middle”, the housing crisis, mature neighbourhood overlay and intensification while implementing the New Official Plan policies?
- How do the updated guidelines align with the City’s proposed Zoning Strategy, the Urban Forest Management plan, 15-minute neighbourhoods and the Climate Change Master Plan.

Along with an internal project team the external stakeholder engagement strategy and public consultation will identify the prevalent issues regarding the development of low-rise buildings in Ottawa to develop an understanding of the key characteristics of low-rise buildings (e.g., typologies, structural and architectural parameters, urban design, etc.) as well as the latest trends in low-rise design. City staff will continue to conduct 'best practice' research including recent local low-rise design, design in other cities. The resulting updated guidelines are anticipated to be provided to Council for endorsement in Q1 of 2023. Following Council approval, they will undergo an education campaign to raise awareness with City staff, the development industry, the design community, and the general public.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

The subject guidelines are applicable to all forms of infill housing and will be applicable in serviced villages. This report is subject to review and approval by the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee in addition to Planning Committee.

Consultation

Public consultation will be completed as part of the second phase of the update to the Low-rise Infill Housing guidelines. The first phase is technical in nature and provides housekeeping updates to the existing guidelines to be utilized on an interim basis.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to implementing the recommendations of this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct risks associated with the contents of this report, comprising updates to the Council approved Urban Design Guidelines for Low-rise Infill Housing which support the New Official Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

The second phase of the project will include consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to ensure the updated guidelines adequately address accessibility as it relates to Low-rise infill housing.

As part of that update, the Accessibility Office will be consulted to ensure that an accessibility lens is applied to the development of the new guidelines.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

This project addresses the following Term of Council Priorities:

- Thriving Communities
- Environmental Stewardship

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 Urban Design Guidelines for Low-rise Infill Housing – May 2022

CONCLUSION

The proposed housekeeping amendments to the Urban Design Guidelines for Low-rise Infill Housing (Document 1) will support provincial and municipal interests concerning high-quality urban design, contribute to higher quality public spaces, and optimize conditions for attractive neighbourhoods. The updated guidelines are in alignment with the New Official Plan and represent a first phase in the production of city-wide guidelines for Low-rise Infill Housing.

DISPOSITION

Following the approval of the housekeeping update to the Urban Design Guidelines for Low-rise Infill Housing (Document 1), the updated document will be made available on the City's website.