

Opportunities to increase missing middle housing and gentle density, including supports for multigenerational housing

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This consultation closes at 11:59 p.m. on:
April 29, 2022

Proposal summary

The government is seeking input on how to diversify housing choices in existing neighbourhoods. This consultation is focused on finding ways to support gentle density and increase Ontario’s missing middle housing, including encouraging multigenerational housing solutions.

Proposal details

Ontario is the best place to live, start a business and raise a family – but we can only build on our success if all Ontarians and their families are able to find a home that’s right for them. The province’s housing policies are working to get more homes built faster, but too many Ontarians still struggle to find a home. We are introducing **More Homes for Everyone**, that proposes targeted policies for the immediate term that make housing fairer for hard-working Ontarians and make it faster to build the homes that families need and deserve.

Addressing the housing supply crisis is a long-term strategy that requires long-term commitment and co-ordination from all levels of government.

The Task Force report is our long-term housing roadmap. Similar to Ontario's approach with regular Red Tape Reduction bills, the province is committed to implementing the Task Force's recommendations with a housing supply action plan every year over four years, starting in 2022-2023, with policies and tools that support multi-generational homes and missing middle housing.

Missing middle and multigenerational housing

"Missing middle" is a term used to describe a wide range of multi-unit housing types compatible in scale with single-detached neighbourhoods, and that have gone 'missing' from many of our cities. For example, laneway housing, garden suites, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, rowhouses, townhouses, and low and mid-rise apartments. This gentle density would have minimal impact on existing neighbourhoods while providing additional housing options. Neighbourhoods that offer a variety of housing choices can accommodate people of all ages and abilities, for example:

- Young adults can stay in the neighbourhoods they grew up in (close to parents)
- Older people can age-in-place and stay in their preferred community
- Multigenerational families including people with disabilities and/or other care needs can live together to offset the high costs of housing, childcare and/or long-term care.

This type of intensification of existing neighbourhoods provides people of all ages and abilities with opportunities to live in complete communities, close to a range of transportation options and amenities, and in a community that meets people's needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime. Multigenerational housing can also support the cultural needs and cultural safety of racialized communities and Indigenous people living in urban areas.

As municipalities plan for future population growth, infill and intensification provides an opportunity to accommodate that growth while making efficient use of existing infrastructure and services.

During recent consultations, the government heard support for allowing missing middle type housing to be built as-of-right, eliminating appeals for this type of modest infill development, and that further support is needed for

housing for multi-generational families.

The government has also heard that zoning by-laws are often out-of-date and/or not “forward-looking”. Zoning by-laws that provide clear direction in areas where development is anticipated can help reduce delays by avoiding the need for zoning amendments.

The Planning Act provides for a variety of tools that can help facilitate housing development. For example, as part of the Housing Supply Action Plan in 2019, Planning Act changes were made to require municipalities to establish official plan policies and amend their zoning by-laws to allow additional residential units for detached, semi-detached and row houses in both the primary dwelling and ancillary building or structure. The Planning Act also restricts appeals of both these required additional residential unit official plan policies and zoning by-laws to the Ontario Land Tribunal except by the Minister. Complementary changes were also made to the Building Code and Development Charges Act to further encourage the development of additional residential units. The establishment of an additional residential unit is at the discretion of individual homeowners and may take place in existing or new residences.

Further, the community planning permit system is a tool available to all local municipalities in Ontario. It combines zoning, minor variance and site plan processes into one streamlined permitting system. The community planning permit system has in the past been identified as a potential solution for various planning issues, including forward-looking zoning and the provision of a range and mix of housing.

The Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force also made recommendations that could support opportunities for the creation of missing middle housing, for example:

- Allow “as of right” residential housing up to four units and up to four storeys on a single residential lot, and
- Permit “as of right” secondary suites, garden suites, and laneway houses province-wide.

We want to hear best practices and examples of how we can support the creation of more missing middle housing, including multigenerational housing, in Ontario.

Solving the housing crisis will require new ways of thinking and everyone coming together to do what it takes.

Any specific policy proposals to address these housing matters would be consulted on prior to the government making any changes.

Discussion Questions

Question 1:

- What are the biggest barriers and delays to diversifying the types of housing built in existing neighbourhoods?

Question 2:

- What further changes to the planning and development process would you suggest to make it easier to support gentle density and build missing middle housing and multigenerational housing, in Ontario?

Question 3:

- Are you aware of innovative approaches to land use planning and community building from other jurisdictions that would help increase the supply of missing middle and multigenerational housing?

Question 4:

- Are there any other changes that would help support opportunities for missing middle and multigenerational housing?

Supporting materials

Related links

[Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force Report](https://www.ontario.ca/page/housing-affordability-task-force-report)

(<https://www.ontario.ca/page/housing-affordability-task-force-report>)

[Planning Act](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p13) (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p13>)

[Add a second unit in your house](https://www.ontario.ca/page/add-second-unit-your-house) (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/add-second-unit-your-house>)

[Housing Supply Action Plan \(https://www.ontario.ca/page/more-homes-more-choice-ontarios-housing-supply-action-plan\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/more-homes-more-choice-ontarios-housing-supply-action-plan)

Related ERO (Environmental Registry of Ontario) notices

[Proposed Planning Act Changes \(the proposed More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022\) \(/notice/019-5284\)](/notice/019-5284)

[Seeking Feedback on Housing Needs in Rural and Northern Municipalities \(/notice/019-5287\)](/notice/019-5287)

View materials in person

Important notice: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, viewing supporting materials in person is not available at this time.

Please reach out to the Contact listed in this notice to see if alternate arrangements can be made.

Comment

Let us know what you think of our proposal.

Have questions? Get in touch with the contact person below. Please include the ERO (Environmental Registry of Ontario) number for this notice in your email or letter to the contact.

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