

Westboro Infill Zoning Study
Discussion Paper # 2

Neighbourhood Vision and
Potential Zoning Standards

Introduction

In September 2019, Staff released a Discussion Paper relating to infill and housing development within the Westboro neighbourhood. The purpose of this was to open up discussion relating to the form in which new housing construction should occur within the area, as well as the elements of the neighbourhood valued by residents that should be maintained and enhanced as the neighbourhood grows.

This paper is intended to set out a vision for the future growth of Westboro, in particular where and how residential growth is to be directed, and the central elements of the neighbourhood that are intended to be addressed by this vision. The paper will also lay out potential zoning standards that can be used to help achieve this vision.

The City is presently in the process of developing a new Official Plan which will provide policies directing growth over the next 25 years. Once that is completed, it will be necessary to prepare a new Zoning By-law that is consistent with the policies set out in the new plan. As such, this represents an opportunity to take a different approach to zoning within Westboro, and test out a variety of standards and requirements that have not been previously used in the Zoning By-law.

Broader Context

Ottawa is growing quickly, as our economy grows and diversifies, and as new opportunities emerge. Recently the City has surpassed 1 million residents. Over the life of the new Official Plan, it is anticipated that Ottawa as a whole will grow by another 400,000 residents, which is expected to require an additional 190,000 dwelling units. New residents will all want to live somewhere, and all have different motivations and housing priorities.

In Westboro, we have seen an average 1 to 1.5% change in lot turnover year after year, meaning that each year, on average about 50 new units are built. Some are in detached houses, some in semi-detached, some in multi-unit and larger-scale developments. In general, the most significant developments have happened on the edge of the neighbourhood - towards Richmond, Byron or Churchill, with local streets subject to change of a lower degree. But the demand is still there, and where opportunity appears in the form of an available lot, redevelopment can and will happen. Over 25 years this means somewhere between 1,000 to 1,500 new units will likely be built on lots that already have homes on them. The question is how to manage this change, and how best to direct it to the appropriate locations.

Vision for Westboro

Westboro is and will continue to be a diverse neighbourhood, offering livable streets and homes suitable for a wide diversity of income and household types. The streetscapes will be walkable, the architecture interesting, the yards well landscaped.

Trees will continue to be a key part of the landscape, with development working in and around large mature trees, and making room for new growth to add to the urban forest. Both street trees, as well as rear yard trees, form an important part of the mature tree canopy in Westboro, and so room for new growth will be provided both in front of and behind buildings.

Density will increase with new households, new units in a variety of sizes and tenures, and within new building forms throughout the neighbourhood. Larger buildings of 3 and 4 storeys

with multiple units within will generally occur on major streets with the capacity and infrastructure to manage them and to take advantage of bus lines, sidewalks and cycling infrastructure whether in place or planned in the near future, while development and change in the interior local streets will be more gradual, in the 2 to 3 storey range, and smaller in form - building on the context of what is already there.

Walkability will improve as the neighbourhood transitions toward a wider variety of transportation modes. While cars may still be a part of the Westboro environment, they will not be the primary influence on the design of the streetscape, and where surface parking occurs in rear yards, this will be balanced with a desire to retain rear yards for environmental and recreational purposes, and rear yards in their turn will contribute to an inside-the-block natural area that will in turn provide residents with direct access to nature, provide environmental benefits, and provide a sense of beauty.

These values are consistent with the values that have been expressed in comments provided through consultation with Westboro residents. They are also consistent with the key values expressed in the vision statement submitted by the Westboro Community Association.

In 25 years, the life of the New Official Plan, Westboro will change significantly, but the major elements of its underlying character - the trees, the interesting and varied architecture, the walkability - will still be there.

What will the New Official Plan say about Westboro?

In the past, policy has painted broad swaths of the City as “general urban low-rise” and provided direction that new housing units should be compatible with what exists now. That has resulted in a policy uncertainty where no neighbourhood really knows what the policy vision is for their neighbourhood. Nothing now really guides how the City would consider a request to construct a 4-storey building in the middle of a local block of 1- and 2-storey detached dwellings, other than we would seek for it to be compatible. Nothing in policy says how a lot in Westboro would be treated differently from a lot in Kanata. So policy can be much more descriptive and provide that vision for how a neighbourhood can expect change to occur based on where it is. In turn, policy can provide direction for the zoning – the document that sets the rules – in relation to the extent to which development may occur.

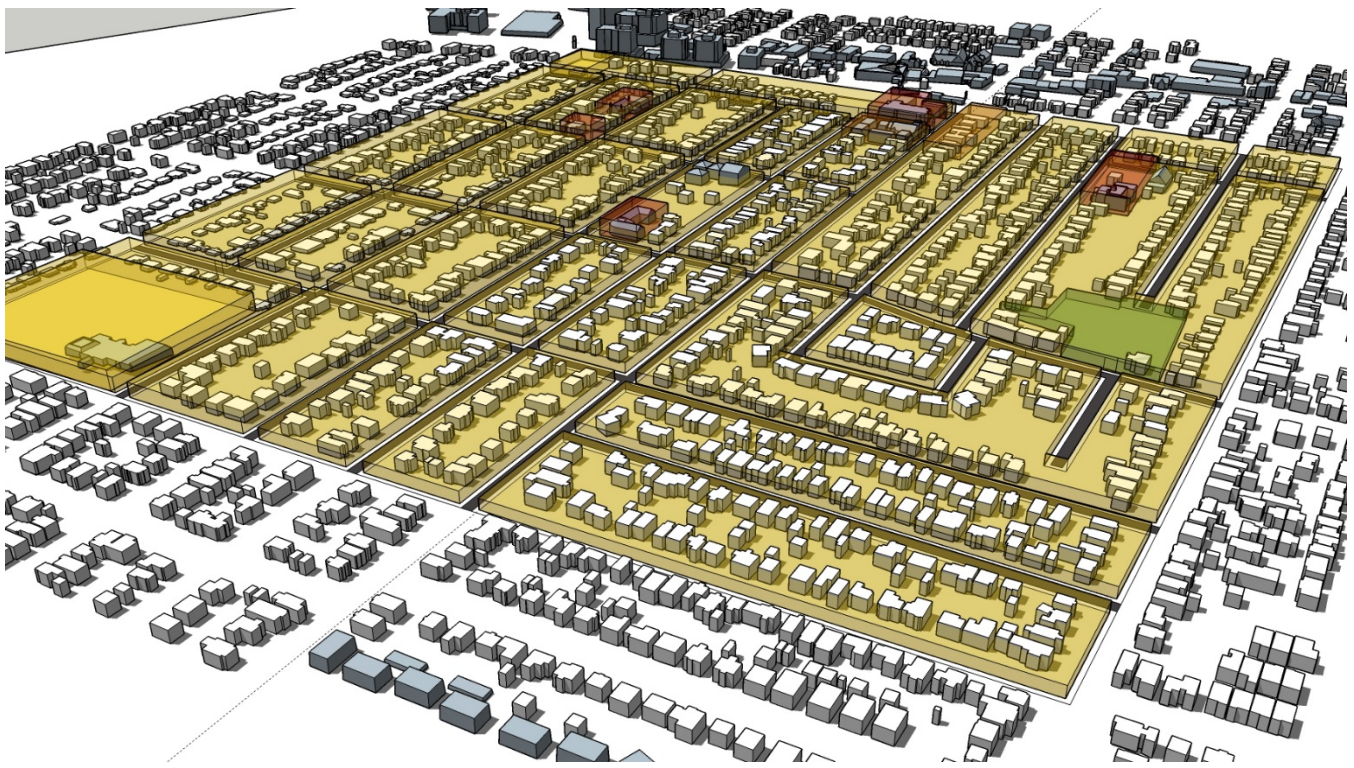


Fig. 1: Existing zoning height permissions for the Westboro Interim Control By-law Area (referred to in this document as the “study area”). Note that aside from specific buildings within this area, there is no differentiation between zoning permissions in this neighbourhood, regardless of context.

The new Official Plan will provide new, more descriptive policies that acknowledge that a neighbourhood in the downtown is not the same as one in the suburbs. They have different characteristics, different access to transit and services, different expectations of density and intensity of use. They are at different stages of evolution. Similarly, there will be areas that will be magnets for growth – the town centres, transit stations, and main streets. In the past policy considered this as two separate worlds – established neighbourhoods and intensification areas. Reality dictates that these worlds are the same, and transition into one another.

With that being considered, how will Westboro change?

The proposed direction for Westboro would have, as its basic premise, its location as an Inner Urban neighbourhood in the new Official Plan. Being an Inner Urban neighbourhood will mean, in the new Official Plan, that new development, new buildings, and the way sites are laid out, must be urban (rather than suburban) in design. Those terms will be defined.

More specific direction within the neighbourhood will be structured based on the importance of each street within the context of the broader neighbourhood and beyond. Generally speaking, major streets like Churchill Avenue, which represent major routes through the neighbourhood for a variety of transportation options, represent logical areas to concentrate housing and a variety of supporting uses at a larger scale. These different contexts are outlined as follows.



Fig. 2: View of the potential strategy within the study area. The intent is to concentrate dense housing forms towards major streets within the neighbourhood (shown in blue), with reduced change in the interior. Corner lots within interior areas frame the block and have more prominence, whereas interior lots will be more contextual with existing forms.

Major Streets

Where a lot is located on, or in close proximity (within the depth of a block) to, a major street (like Byron or Churchill), or within close walking proximity to a major commercial street and area, it should expect to experience additional housing demand and a rate of change that will result in a very different streetscape and neighbourhood experience within the timeframe of the new Official Plan.

When a lot is redeveloped on a major street within these locations, it may be of a form that is higher and larger than the existing context, so as to provide more opportunity for a greater range of housing in a more dense form. The interface between the building and the street will be more urban, with emphasis on defining a pedestrian experience and supportive of street trees to extend the urban tree canopy. Setbacks to the street may be set at 3 metres to assist in enhancing the public realm experience. The number, width, and location of driveway accesses will be minimized where possible to further emphasize the pedestrian-oriented nature of this street.

This means lots along Churchill Avenue, the primary north-south street within the study area, may see up to 4 storeys with greater allowance for density and housing units. Corner lots at prominent intersections, particularly Churchill and Byron Avenue may see up to 6 storeys to frame these important routes. There may also be an opportunity to introduce the ability to provide non-residential uses along these streets on a limited and secondary basis, to allow for a wider range of services to locate within a broader range of the study area and promote walkability within the neighbourhood.



Fig. 3: A 3-storey apartment building on Churchill Avenue near Carling Avenue. It is larger in size and form than what is encountered on local streets in Westboro, however retains space for landscaping and street trees.

Streets like Byron or Dovercourt are of greater importance and prominence than other local streets (they may have bus routes, for instance). Lots on these streets will also experience change that may result in different massing and building volumes from what is there now, but this will be limited to a maximum of 3 storeys above-grade in height. They will have restrictions on building mass which may include transitions to reduce the impact on local servicing, roads and sidewalks, while still allowing for attainment of density requirements to support the cost of providing appropriate levels of service and infrastructure in the community. The zoning will be set in accordance with the above directions, which may create regulatory permissions on these streets that are different than what exists today.



Fig. 4: A pair of 6-unit apartment buildings located on Byron Avenue, with a shared driveway to rear yard parking. While their built form is larger than many buildings located on local streets, they are smaller in scale than the aforementioned apartment building on Churchill Avenue.

Local Streets

Where a lot fronts onto a local street, and particularly where not in proximity to a major street, there is likely to continue to be pressure for change, but of a nature that will not fundamentally change the overall look and feel of the neighbourhood within the timeframe of the plan. There will be opportunity to provide 3 storey development on corner lots, while the interior lots will be predominantly 2 storeys, with particularly well-designed buildings, including those with sloped roofs, permitted to go higher to encourage their use in context.

Development will be more contextual with existing homes and will generally be comparable in height and massing, while allowing for a wider diversity of housing types and unit sizes in the community. This can include dwelling types sometimes referred to as “missing middle” housing forms, such as townhouse dwellings or multi-unit apartment dwellings that conform to the aforementioned contextual elements.



Fig. 5: A 5-unit apartment building located on Cole Avenue within the Interim Control area, next to a semi-detached dwelling. Both are two-storeys in height with sloped roofs, with ample landscaping in the front yard allowing for a consistent mature tree canopy. However, the 5-unit building could not be constructed under today's zoning, since apartment buildings containing four or more principal units are prohibited within the R3R zone.



Fig. 6: The building on the right is a 6-unit building located on Wesley Avenue in the Interim Control Area, adjacent to a detached dwelling. It is three storeys in height, but is also located in close proximity to Byron Avenue, a major street within the study area, and avoids a flat roof design to mitigate the potential massing impacts of the third storey. As with the previous example, it would not be permitted under the present R3R zoning.

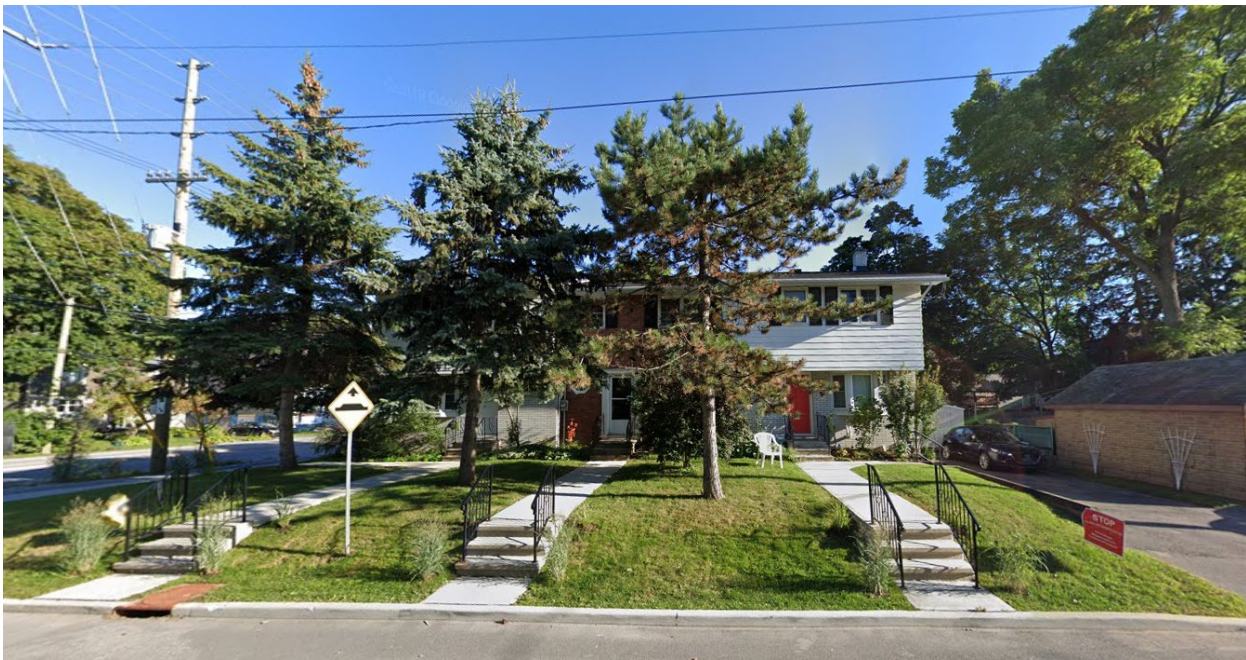


Fig. 7: A 3-unit townhouse located on Kenwood Avenue near Churchill Avenue, within the Interim Control Area. This building is two-storeys in form, with varied material along the exterior of the building. Parking is located away from the front of the building to maximize landscaped area. Of note is that while R3 zones generally permit townhouse dwellings, this is not the case for the R3R and R3S zones that comprise the majority of the Interim Control Area.

Where a property on a local street is adjacent to lots fronting onto a major street, there will be potential for a 3-storey building height. However, the design of these buildings must demonstrate a transition in built form and building mass from that of the major street to the interior of the community, so as to reduce the built form impacts on these areas.

Soft landscaping and tree retention will be of greater priority in site design and building placement, with greater emphasis on tree retention or replacement on private lots to complement the network of public street trees and maintain and expand the urban tree canopy. The zoning will be set in accordance with the above directions, which may create regulatory permissions that differs from what exists today.

Other Areas of Note

The Dovercourt Recreation Centre is located on the north side of Dovercourt Avenue between Golden Avenue and Roosevelt Avenue, and occupies much of this block with the exception of a row of homes fronting onto Avondale Avenue to the north. Given Dovercourt Avenue's status as a major street, and to allow some additional degree of development potential within walking distance of a recreational facility, there is a case for the south side of Avondale abutting the Recreation Centre to be considered as a "transition" area.

The majority of the block bounded by Kenwood and Princeton between Melbourne Avenue and Edison Avenue has been the subject of various zoning by-law amendments. Among other area-specific provisions, the effect of these amendments has been to permit the development of three-storey residential buildings along this block. In addition, this block also contains the existing Cornerstone women's housing building at the northeast corner of Princeton and

Melbourne, which is a larger three-storey building. This block is therefore highlighted as a “transition” area so as to recognize the existing built form that is encountered within it.

Key Principles

Regardless of the location within the study area, there are a number of key principles that new housing development in Westboro should address. These principles reflect and are consistent with the core values that residents and the Westboro Community Association have expressed in consultation:

Trees/Greenspace

Key Principles:

- Trees and greenspace, where possible and viable, should be a key feature of front and rear yards.
- Ensure that landscaping, where provided, is configured in such a way as to support the retention of existing trees or the planting and adequate growth of new trees.
- Incentivize infill that devotes a large amount of yard space to greenspace and permeable or porous material.

Street Animation

Key Principles:

- Ensure building and front yard designs that contribute to an animated streetscape that is visually interesting and pedestrian-friendly.
- Allow for a variety of architectural designs, provided such designs respond to the surrounding neighbourhood context.
- Avoid overly “boxy” designs and the appearance of blank front facades.

Housing

Key Principles:

- Residential density will increase throughout the neighbourhood, the degree of which will change based on proximity to major streets or similar corridors.
- Ensuring an attractive and compatible built form will be the primary consideration for new housing development. A variety of housing types are appropriate and will be permitted provided compatibility, surrounding context, and the other key principles noted in this vision are adequately addressed.

Walkability

Key Principles:

- Ensure that pedestrian interaction in site design is emphasized over parking, driveways, and car-oriented development.
- On-site parking is a feature that should only be provided after all other matters (e.g. adequate landscaping, compatible building design and massing) have been addressed.

Ideas for New Zoning Standards

In order to implement the vision laid out in this discussion paper, zoning standards will be required to directly regulate site elements that contribute to or detract from the existing neighbourhood fabric. This includes introducing standards that promote greenspace for tree planting and retention, and standards that promote walkability by reducing car-oriented design. This section will illustrate a variety of ideas that could be implemented to help achieve these goals and objectives.

A key point to keep in mind is that any standards that are introduced will apply to **all lots** within the study area, not just lots where infill is proposed. As such, any standards that act to restrict the development or construction potential on a property may also have implications on what an individual homeowner may be able to do with their property, even if it doesn't involve the construction of new buildings or additional units.

Temporary Zoning By-law

The City has the authority to pass temporary zoning by-laws under the *Planning Act*, which allows for the introduction of zoning standards on a temporary basis for up to three years. While this has not been commonly applied to an entire neighbourhood, Staff note that with a new Official Plan in development, there are likely to be significant changes to the City's policy regime within a fairly short term.

Where a proposed standard is **more restrictive** than existing requirements, Staff are proposing that any standards introduced through this study to be temporary over a three-year period. This will allow for Staff to monitor any new requirements that are introduced to ensure that they are effective in accomplishing their intent. Where a proposed standard is **less restrictive** than existing requirements, this will require a permanent change to the zoning by-law, since such changes cannot be made temporarily; doing so may have the effect in rendering any construction that takes advantage of such changes illegal in the future.

NOTE: The proposed zoning standards presented in this section are intended to give a general idea of regulatory measures that may be considered for the study area. The inclusion of a particular standard in this document does not necessarily constitute the intent to introduce such a standard within the Zoning By-law.

Landscaping Requirements

These requirements directly relate to the provision of greenspace. The amount required, as well as its location, can be directed to ensure that development provides adequate space to retain existing trees, or support the planting and growth of new trees. Landscaping requirements can ensure that greenspace is emphasized over features using hard surfaces.

The following standards are potential ways in which this can be required:

-Minimum Rear Yard Landscaped Area (via either a percentage of yard area, a prescribed minimum square metres of area, or via a specified buffer from the rear lot line)

Presently, the Zoning By-law imposes a requirement for rear yard amenity area in the case of three-unit dwellings and low-rise apartment dwellings. The requirement in these cases is a minimum of 15 square metres per unit, which must be located towards the rear lot line. 80% of

the total requirement must be softly landscaped, thus this amenity area requirement effectively also serves as a landscaped area requirement.

In the case of three-unit dwellings and other multi-unit dwellings where rear yard parking is provided, this amenity area requirement is “wrapped around” the parking, such that any landscaping that is provided is configured in such a way as to minimize effective greenspace, particularly for rear yard trees (existing or new).

A reconsideration of the manner in which landscaped area is provided in the rear yard could help ensure that it is more effectively emphasized. This could include not just an overall area requirement, but also require that some area come in the form of a buffer from the rear lot line. By requiring that an area within a given distance of a property line be softly landscaped, it can be ensured that greenspace in rear yards is adequately provided in such a way as to not overly emphasize other uses of a rear yard, such as on-site parking or waste management areas.

Minimum Landscaped Buffer from Rear Lot Line	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifies a location for greenspace to be concentrated on lots, in a part of the rear yard where existing trees are likely to be located.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not be effective if not of a certain width. However, a buffer that is too wide on shallower lots may restrict the ability to provide other rear yard functions (e.g. patios, storage sheds). • As nothing other than soft landscaping may be located within the buffer, it restricts the placement of features that, while may be close to existing trees, may not necessarily impact their retention (e.g. smaller sheds or accessory structures without large foundations impacting the tree roots). • As this would apply to both new infill and existing properties, this may trigger the need for variances should a resident wish to construct features within the required buffer area (e.g. pools, sheds, similar structures).
Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain structures may be permitted within the buffer where they have little to no impact on landscaping or soil volume needed to support trees (e.g. sheds or other accessory buildings under a certain size where no foundation is needed).

Minimum Landscaped Area in Rear Yard	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would directly indicate (whether a specified area or as a percentage) how much of the rear yard is required for this purpose, and consequently how much of it can be dedicated to other functions. • May allow space for existing or new trees in a larger variety of locations within the rear yard.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May impact other amenity uses that require hardscaping such as patios, decks, or pools, even for uses such as detached dwellings where there is presently no rear yard landscaping requirement. This may result in the need for minor variance approval to construct such features due to insufficient rear yard landscaping.

Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minimum area could be provided as a percentage, ensuring that the area provided is proportional to the size of the rear yard and the lot as a whole. • The minimum area could be a specific number, so that smaller lots in the study area still require substantial area for greenspace. • It may or may not be required to aggregate the required landscaping into one contiguous area. • These measures could be combined with a buffer from the rear lot line, ensuring that a certain portion of the required landscape area is focused towards the rear of the lot.
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Parking

No on-site parking is required for residential buildings containing fewer than 12 units (which is all that current zoning within the study area permits). However, parking continues to be a desired element with much of the infill occurring within the study area.

Space provided for on-site parking means less space available for everything else that a building site needs or can benefit from, including trees, and recreation and amenity space. For this reason (among many others), Staff consider any potential re-introduction of minimum parking requirements to be outside the scope of the Westboro Infill Study, and measures to encourage developments without on-site parking are appropriate as a result.

In addition, if walkability is to be considered a desirable element, it must be recognized that spaces should be designed for pedestrians first and not cars first. Prioritizing parking, particularly in the front yard, runs directly counter to this goal. However, even designs without parking directly in the front yard can detract from such an environment, depending on how the rest of the site is oriented.

Previous amendments, most notably the Mature Neighbourhoods/Streetscape Character Analysis regulations via the Infill 1 By-law, have made efforts to discourage parking from being prioritized in infill. However, additional measures that can be applied to control this, or at least mitigate the negative impacts of on-site parking, may include:

-Landscaping requirements, as per the section above

Requirements pertaining to landscaping and to surface parking are directly related to each other in that land dedicated to surface parking generally reduces the area available to be devoted to landscaped features, greenspace, and trees.

-Requirements for permeable or porous paving material

Similar to the above, parking spaces and driveways can also impact greenspace and trees where concrete or asphalt is used. Given that these materials are impervious and tend to extend well below surface level, tree roots (which extend underground well beyond the location of the tree itself) cannot grow under such materials. This can result in harm to existing trees even where these areas are not directly adjacent to those trees.

In addition, a high amount of land area devoted to monolithic paving materials can also have negative effects on site drainage and stormwater management, which can also have negative

impacts on neighbouring properties. In the winter, there is also the need to provide space for snow storage, and excessive use of yards for parking can limit space available for this purpose, while at the same time resulting in a larger area that needs to be cleared of snow – requiring a greater amount of snow to be contained within a smaller area to remain on-site.

The requirement for permeable or porous materials for certain parking configurations, such as rear yard parking configurations, can mitigate some of the effects of large parking areas.

Requirements for Permeable or Porous Paving Material	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May mitigate the effect of parking and paved surfaces on tree cover and tree roots.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be difficult to enforce (e.g. a builder may show a permeable paved area on plan, but may change to monolithic asphalt once the building is constructed).

-Restrictions or prohibitions of surface parking

This would potentially have the effect of requiring parking, where desired, to be located inside the building envelope.

There may be certain lot types or configurations, such as corner lots, where such restrictions on surface parking could be more relaxed, where there are additional means of access to a site that allow for a lower proportion of the site being paved for parking.

Restrictions or Prohibitions of Surface Parking	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits or eliminates area devoted to parking in front and rear yards, which is a major contributor to greenspace and tree loss due to infill.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring parking to be provided inside the principal building (particularly if underground parking) can be expensive, and potentially cost-prohibitive depending on the size of the project.
Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The restriction could be limited to certain parking configurations within the rear yard, such as where more than one parking space is provided. • Another alternative is to prohibit surface parking specifically for lots below a certain width, where there is less space available to provide parking. • The aforementioned restrictions could be relaxed somewhat for corner lots, where rear yard parking can potentially be accessed off the side street, reducing the overall amount of paving involved. • On-site parking is not required for buildings containing twelve or fewer dwelling units, and as such, no parking is always an alternative available for these dwelling types. This is not proposed to change as a result of this study.

Building Envelope

The building envelope is defined as maximum permitted size, height, and location of a building on a lot. Where buildings are designed in a manner that is out of scale with its surroundings, it

has a greater potential to detract from the existing streetscape, and can impact the amount of area available for existing or newly-planted trees to grow.

Previous amendments, notably the Infill By-laws, have increased restrictions to this envelope. The Infill 2 By-law, in particular, lowered heights in some areas, and increased the minimum rear yard setback from 25% of lot depth to 28 to 30% of the depth depending on lot size.

With that in mind, a contextual approach to the permitted building envelope for infill development may be helpful in achieving effective infill design and addressing concerns relating to building massing, as well as in terms of providing space for landscaped area and greenspace. Zoning standards that address this may include:

-Maximum Building Height

A criticism against the three-unit dwellings that have been developed is that they are both larger and taller compared to existing buildings on local streets, which are generally two storeys on most local streets. Presently, the R3R and R3S zones permit building heights of 11 metres (3 storeys) for triplexes, but only 8 metres (2 storeys) for every other permitted use.

Staff are of the opinion that appropriate height is, in part, dependent on context. While it may not necessarily be appropriate to permit taller buildings in the middle of a block that is predominantly two-storey or lower, such buildings may be justified on major streets or on the corners/edges of local blocks.



--- Interior Lots on Local Streets Max 8m and 2 Storeys
--- Corner Lots up to Max 11m and 3 Storeys

The proposed direction with the study area will direct a larger scale of housing development onto major streets and intersections. In order to permit this, it is necessary and appropriate to allow additional building height on such streets.

With this in mind, the Department proposes that building heights within the study area should be as follows, based on their location/context:

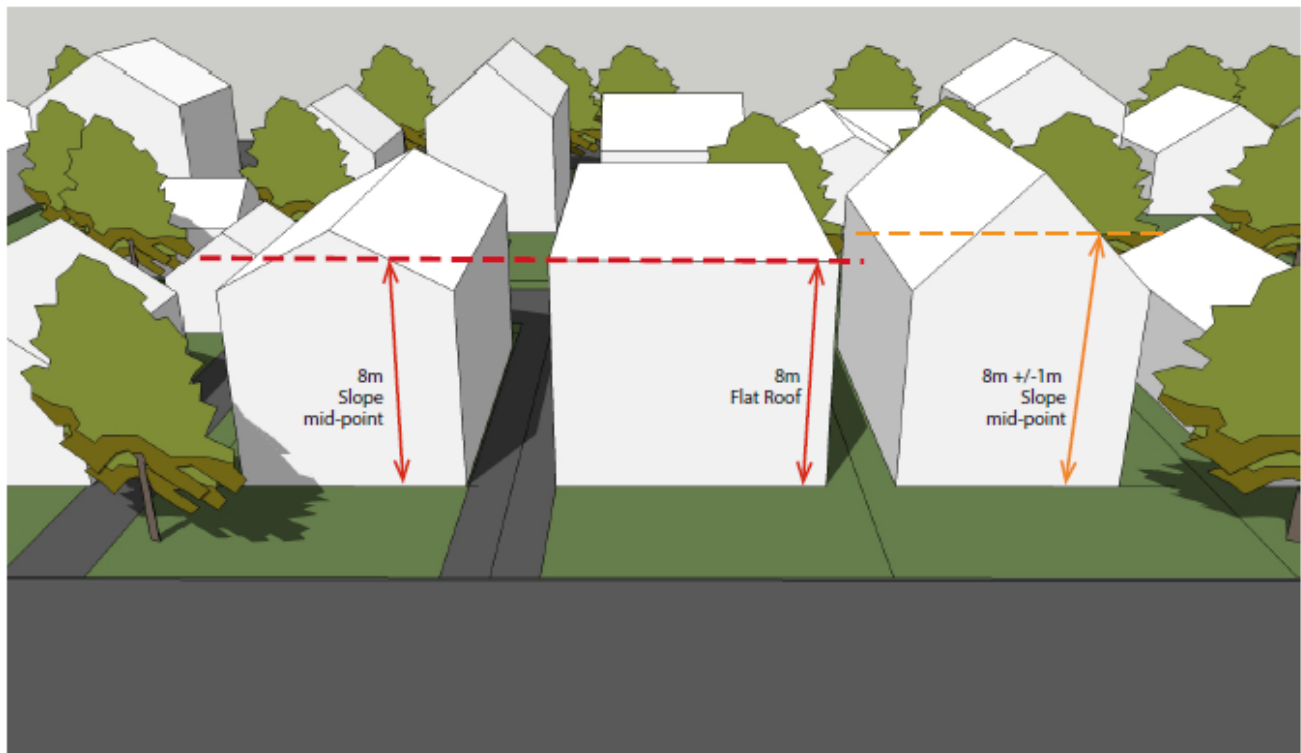
Major Streets	
Churchill Avenue	4 storeys
Byron Avenue, Clare Avenue, Dovercourt Avenue west of Churchill	3 storeys
Local Streets	
Corner lot	3 storeys
Lot adjacent to, or within the same block as a lot fronting onto a major street	3 storeys
All other cases	2 storeys, or 3 storeys if using a pitched roof with minimum slope 1:2



- Zoning Hierarchy:
- ① 1. Major Street – Churchill (blue): Churchill represents the primary north-south route through the study area and includes multiple transportation options, including bike lanes and transit access. Residential uses up to 4 storeys in height are permitted, with potential opportunities for supporting non-residential uses.
 - ② 2. Other Major Streets (red): Streets such as Byron Avenue and Dovercourt Avenue are of some prominence within the neighbourhood, although not to the same degree as Churchill Avenue. Residential uses up to 3 storeys in height are permitted.
 - ③ 3. Local Streets – Corner Lots/Transition Areas (orange): This refers to corner lots abutting local roads, as well as lots fronting on local roads that are also adjacent to or in close proximity of a major street. Residential uses up to 3 storeys in height are permitted.
 - ④ 4. Local Streets – Interior (yellow): This refers to any other interior lot fronting onto a local street. Residential uses up to 2 storeys in height are permitted.

Note that the above heights are for flat-roof buildings; there may be the potential for pitched-roof buildings to be taller within the neighbourhood interior.

Peaked roofs are a common feature among many buildings within the interior of Westboro. While it is not the role of zoning to regulate permitted architectural styles, building height is defined based on the type of roof used in a building. Flat roofs, for example, are measured to the highest point of the roof surface, whereas roofs containing a pitch are measured to the midpoint between the peak of the roof and its eaves. There is thus an opportunity to either adjust the permitted building height (or redefine how height is calculated under the Zoning By-law) to encourage a wider variety of roof styles within the interior of local roads. This could include the permission of additional height where the slope is of a certain pitch, as shown below.



- - - 8m Max Building Height Flat Roof/Sloped Roof
- - - Additional Height allowed for Variety of Sloped Roof Types (Max 2 Storeys)

Changes to maximum building height	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes a greater certainty of anticipated built form within the study area. Where previously taller height was permitted in the case of specific uses (triplexes), height permissions would now be based on the location of the lot within the context of major streets and corner lots.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This does not take into consideration situations where existing heights on local streets may be taller than 2 storeys, where a taller height may be justified despite its location.

<p>Alternatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taller heights can be allowed on local streets, however subject to design review (via Site Plan Control or otherwise) when above a certain height (i.e. 3 or more storeys instead of 2). • Allow larger heights based on roof type (i.e. taller pitch roofs are subject to a taller height maximum), per the diagram above.
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-Rear Yard Setback/Depth of Building

As previously noted, minimum rear yard setbacks were increased under the Infill 2 By-law. However, there are numerous cases where a building compliant with the new standard still projects significantly deeper into the rear yard than the existing buildings within the same block. This can have negative impacts in terms of the building’s massing within the surrounding context.

A maximum building depth, possibly based on the depth of existing buildings within the block, could help address these concerns and allow for a more sensitive design in this manner. In the context of an interior lot, there are multiple ways to address this:



The above diagram represents one example of how a permitted building envelope can be based on the existing envelopes of adjacent lots. In the above case, for the lot in the middle of the block, the existing rear yard setbacks are averaged, and then that average is reduced by 20%, the result of which is the

minimum rear yard setback for the middle lot. If abutting lots' rear yards are larger, the middle lot's rear yard must consequently also be larger.

-Permitted envelope and minimum rear yard based on existing rear yards of abutting lots

This would result in a rear yard setback that is based off of the existing rear yard setbacks of those of neighbouring buildings, in order to allow for a relatively consistent building size and massing, and limit the potential for new buildings to overwhelm existing neighbours.

However, it is recognized that infill development, particularly when located on smaller lots, tends to be larger in size or depth than existing buildings. In addition, where an existing adjacent building is uncharacteristically small, a rear yard averaging provision may significantly restrict the as-of-right building envelope so as to sterilize much of its development potential. As such, an alternate option is a rear yard requirement of **20% less** than that that may be required by an averaging of adjacent rear yards. This recognizes that infill may be larger in size than existing buildings, but ensures that it still responds to the existing context of the block.

An alternate way to implement a requirement based on the average of abutting lots is to base the requirement on the depths of abutting buildings (from front wall to rear wall), or by otherwise not allowing a building to project further back than the average depths of abutting buildings from the front lot line.

The averaging could be expanded to include additional properties beyond the adjacent lots. This has the advantage of minimizing the effect of an uncharacteristically larger or small rear yard, however as rear yards will need to be determined based on a survey or similar document, it may be difficult or costly to provide accurate measurements beyond adjacent lots.

Rear Yard Setback Averaging (minus 20%)	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly addresses the existing context of adjacent homes, ensuring that the massing of a new or enlarged building is comparable to its neighbours
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rear yard setbacks of existing buildings within Westboro are in many cases inconsistent even within the same block, such that applying a rear yard averaging provision may in turn result in an inconsistent rear yard setback requirement. • In addition, the location of rear lot lines is also not always consistent (e.g. one lot may be deeper than an adjacent lot). Where abutting lots are not equal in depth, it becomes more difficult to consistently apply this measurement in line with its intent, since a change to lot depth means a change to the rear yard setback. • The more properties that are included in the averaging, the more difficult it will be to determine what the requirement is for a specific lot, especially if it goes beyond directly abutting lots.
Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rear yard setback could be reduced further than 20% of the average of existing setbacks, or a portion of the building could project further, such that the massing effect on neighbouring properties is mitigated. • Instead of basing the requirement on the average of existing rear yard setbacks, the requirement could instead be based on the average building depths of abutting properties, such that the rear wall of the new building

	<p>could not project more than 20% further into the rear yard than that average depth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This measure has the advantage of being more consistent when abutting lots are of different depth, since it is based on distance from front and not rear lot lines. ● Generally, the intent should not be to allow a setback lower than that required by the Infill 2 By-law as a result of this rule (normally between 28 and 30% of the lot depth, depending on the size of lot).
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-Maximum Building Depth from Front Lot Line

An alternative to applying a standard rear yard setback is to instead base the maximum building envelope on a fixed distance from the front lot line. This would ensure a consistent building depth and size even on lots that are significantly or uncharacteristically large in depth. This also ensures that, on blocks with particularly deep lots, a building’s as-of-right footprint is not significantly larger or deeper than other existing buildings.



--- Maximum Building Distance from Front Lot Line

Maximum Distance from Front Lot Line	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensures a consistent measurement, regardless of lot size or depth. This allows for greater consistency and certainty in terms of the permitted building envelope.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This measurement is difficult to see in the “real world”, compared to a rear yard setback.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would not result in an increased setback on smaller lots.
Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A similar effect can also be accomplished by requiring a maximum depth for the building (i.e. distance between the frontmost wall and the rearmost wall). • The advantage of requiring a maximum distance from the front lot line is that it prevents the same building from being shifted further into the rear yard (up to the current rear yard setback requirement). While front yard setbacks are required to address streetscape character, excessive front yard setbacks relative to neighbours can also negatively impact this character.

Permitted Dwelling Types and Complementary Uses

Multi-unit developments, whether in the form of triplexes, apartment buildings, or long semi-detached containing secondary units, have tended to attract the greatest level of opposition within Westboro over the past few years, among all types of low-rise infill development.

When considering the reasons that underlie these objections, Staff observe that residents appear to see such developments as threats (whether perceived or actual) to one of the above-noted values. For example, Staff observe that trees and greenspace are considered by many commenters to be “under threat” by multi-unit development, as larger building footprints and parking areas can leave a lesser amount of room for trees (existing or new).

Staff would suggest that these concerns are to a large extent tied to the treatment and design of the site. For example, a multi-unit building where parking is not provided, or where the building envelope is smaller, could allow for more of the lot for greenspace and the retention of existing trees. The “vision” portion of this paper shows multiple examples of older multi-unit buildings that are comparable in appearance, size, and available greenspace to other existing homes. Conversely, a single-detached or semi-detached dwelling with much of its front yard devoted to parking/garages, driveways, and/or other similar hard surfaces, can have significant impacts on greenspace and neighbourhood walkability despite being comprised of fewer dwelling units, yet could still be constructed without relief from the Zoning By-law where the permitted building envelope is respected.

In Staff’s view, there appears to be an opportunity to encourage a different approach to the review of infill within the neighbourhood that centres those values as the primary priorities. Presently, the Zoning By-law is structured to treat the interior **use** of the building (i.e. whether it is, for example, a single-detached, semi-detached, or apartment dwelling) as the primary consideration in determining whether or not a development is permissible. This is reflected in the R1-R5 zoning designations of residential neighbourhoods, where R1 zones permit only detached dwellings and R4 and R5 zones permit a full range of housing types. Considerations of **form**, which include the form and design of the building itself but also its supporting functions such as landscaping, parking, and waste management, are secondary to the issue of how many dwelling units are provided, and indeed are based on what specific residential use is proposed.

The proposed development standards are an attempt to more directly address questions of form than presently addressed by the current zoning. However, to ensure that these

considerations are properly emphasized, Staff are of the opinion that it is appropriate and necessary to reconsider how the Zoning By-law treats permitted dwelling types within the study area.

More broadly, availability and affordability of housing within the City as a whole are major concerns. As noted in Discussion Paper 1, the City's housing vacancy rate was consistently below 3% for much of the past decade, with Westboro consistently below the City mark.¹ There is a need to ensure housing availability at a variety of scales.

In addition, the City would note the following with respect to existing and potential future Official Plan policies:

- From the current Official Plan, Staff would note Section 2.2.2, which states in part that *“Applications to amend the Zoning By-law to eliminate residential apartments as a permitted use, or to change the permitted use so that the effect is to down-zone a site, will not be permitted unless there is an equivalent rezoning to ensure no net loss of apartment potential or maintenance of unit yield potential through other forms of multiple-unit housing.”*
- From the Council-adopted Preliminary Policy Directions for the new Official Plan, Staff note that one of the directions pertaining to housing is to *“emphasize building form (size and shape of building) rather than focusing on the type of dwelling (number of units in the building), as a way to provide a broader range of housing options than is currently permitted.”*²

The above policy direction, combined with current housing and affordability trends, necessitates a willingness to consider greater flexibility in terms of the number of units permitted within a building, provided such developments that use that flexibility also take measures to adequately address and enhance the characteristics valued by the neighbourhood in their designs.

On this basis, Staff are of the opinion that regardless of what measures are taken to control the building envelope, emphasize greenspace and limit paved surfaces, these should be accompanied with measures to permit a greater range of dwelling types than what is permitted today, including townhouses and multi-unit buildings, particularly on major corridors. While there will still be limits on the number of units permitted on lots on local streets, they may be less restrictive limits than what is permitted in the current R3R/R3S zoning.

This category of zoning changes will be most apparent on major streets including Churchill Avenue, where it is reasonable to concentrate higher density in addition to taller building heights. Similarly, lots within the same block as and adjacent to lots on major streets (the “transition” areas as noted in the vision), particularly lots in close proximity to those on Churchill Avenue and Byron Avenue, are appropriate areas for higher change and density than the interiors of neighbourhoods.

¹ A 3% vacancy rate is generally considered to be an acceptable vacancy rate for housing. Where this rate is consistently below that mark, this suggests a shortage in housing supply that can also impact housing affordability.

² As per Section 5 of the New Official Plan Preliminary Policy Directions, located on Page 14 of that document.

Given that Churchill is the primary north-south street within the study area, it represents an opportunity for not only the highest level of density within the area, but also for the introduction of non-residential uses to complement this additional density. These include small scale retail and personal service type uses, as well as The Zoning By-law includes a “neighbourhood commercial” (“-c”) suffix that can be added to residentially-zoned lots for areas that can support these complementary uses. Staff propose that Churchill Avenue represents one such opportunity to introduce these permissions.

Other Ideas for Next Steps

While the Westboro Infill Study is at its core a zoning study, there are measures that can be taken to achieve the key principles of this vision that are beyond the realm of land-use planning and infill. As such, the actions suggested in this section are outside the control of the Zoning By-law and therefore outside the scope of this study, but represent potential ideas for next steps that can be explored to further the transition of Westboro towards a walkable, urban neighbourhood.

Management of Parking

There are potential opportunities in looking at ways to manage residential parking at a neighbourhood level, as opposed to a site-by-site level as is done by the Zoning By-law.

The provision of communal parking close to existing residential buildings, as opposed to on-site parking with each development, is one such opportunity. By providing a communal location for parking accessible to local residents, an incentive can be created to provide less or no on-site parking with new development in the area. There are a number of logistical questions associated with such an idea – is it paid for by the City or by developers of infill in the area? What lots could they locate on? What type of structure would be required to support them?

There is also an opportunity to expand the street permit parking program to local streets within the study area. Presently, overnight on-street parking is prohibited within the study area. While parking on-street is encountered to some degree within some parts of the study area, moving to a permit system would allow for the City to better manage how that parking can be accessed and used.

Walkable Streets

Although Westboro is located in relatively close proximity to a mainstreet in Richmond Road and two rapid transit stations (Westboro and Dominion stations), there are opportunities to improve existing streets within the study area to accommodate this walkability. One major example of this is that a number of streets do not currently have sidewalks. Such an addition could further incentivize walkability. The limitation to this is that, depending on the street, the addition of sidewalks may need to be done as part of a full road reconstruction, the timing of which would depend on the workload and work plan of the City's Infrastructure Services branch, and may not be achievable within the short term.

Urban Tree By-law

The Urban Tree By-law has been subject to a recent review, with a revised version adopted by Council. It is intended to take effect this year and includes additional regulations and requirements pertaining to tree protection, including specifically within the context of infill development.

Urban Design Guidelines for Low-Rise Infill Housing

The City is in the process of creating updated design guidelines for infill development. While these would not apply as strict requirements (unlike zoning requirements), the purpose of a guideline document is to set out the type and form of design that Staff would like to see achieved in new development. The intent of introducing updated guidelines is to ensure that these have a greater influence in the design of new infill housing.

Site Plan Control

The new Urban Design Guidelines will also inform the next version of the City's Site Plan Control By-law. The Site Plan Control process is the primary mechanism through which the City evaluates building and site design, and is presently not applicable to development containing fewer than four dwelling units. Presently, most development within the study area has not been subject to this process as a result.

The update to the design guidelines presents an opportunity to discuss changes to the thresholds where Site Plan Control is required, to better reflect the types of development that should be subject to additional design review, in order to ensure better outcomes for infill within Westboro and other residential neighbourhoods. An example of a change could include implementing a threshold based on the actual size or floor area of the building as opposed to the number of units within the building.

Share your thoughts

We encourage you to send us your thoughts and comments on the proposed vision and standards covered in this paper. Please send your comments no later than XXX to:

Robert Sandercott
Ottawa City Hall
110 Laurier Avenue West
Mail Code 01-14
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1
robert.sandercott@ottawa.ca