

# Ottawa is ready for a new Zoning By-law

How the New Zoning By-law provisions will apply the Neighbourhood designation of the Official Plan

City of Ottawa

Cities across Canada are facing housing affordability and climate change crises.

This storymap explains how provisions in the new Zoning By-law will take action to address these crises through implementation of policies in the Official Plan with the goal of achieving healthy, equitable communities and a more affordable city.

The City of Ottawa is developing a new comprehensive Zoning By-law for approval by Council in 2025. The Zoning By-law is a set of regulations that sets rules on what can be built as of right, without having to seek specific permission. Once

approved, the new Zoning By-law will replace the current Zoning By-law (By-law 2008-250).



## The new Zoning By-law

The new Zoning By-law will implement the policies and directions in the City's Official Plan, which outlines a comprehensive land-use policy framework to guide growth and development within the city to the year 2046. The new Zoning By-law will be critical to City efforts to address housing affordability in Ottawa by facilitating growth that aligns with intensification goals outlined in the Official Plan.

## What is a Neighbourhood Zone?

Neighbourhood Zones allow neighbourhoods to evolve in a way that is appropriate based on their location, age, maturity and the needs of the people living in and around them. Where supported by the Official Plan, the draft adds new permissions for non-residential uses to encourage more retail and services near where people live, helping to meet the day-to-day needs of residents.

## Neighbourhood Zones and Subzones

The residential (R1-R5) zones of the current Zoning By-law 2008-250 comprise over 140 distinct zones and subzones. Each of the subzones has further distinct regulations based on the type of dwelling proposed. These subzone-specific regulations are further superseded by zone and area-specific regulations, depending on where a given property is located. This complex

framework of provisions has become increasingly challenging to interpret and implement.

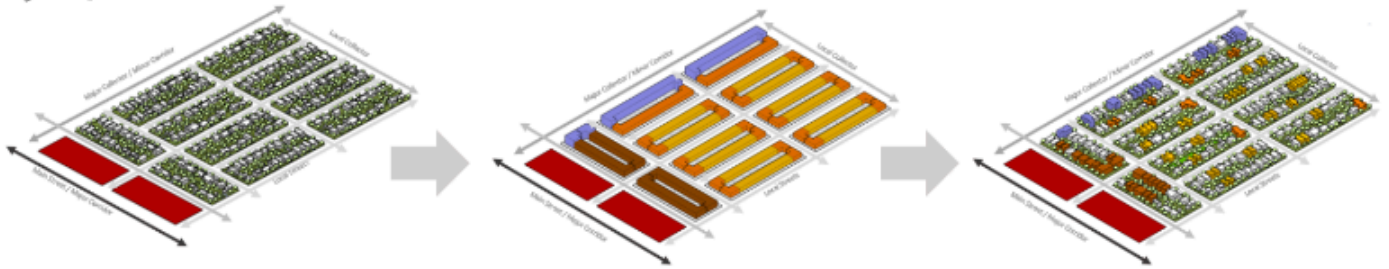
The Neighbourhood zones, which replace the R1 to R5 zones, will, permit a full range of housing options, and will establish standards focused on regulating built form and function. This “form-based” framework is different from the primarily “typology-based” form of the current By-law, where the number and interior configuration of units primarily determines the standards that are applied.

In shifting to this new framework, the Neighbourhood zones will be implemented in a more concise format that is easier to follow.

The new Neighbourhood zones are proposed to be structured into:

- six primary zones that regulate the maximum height and density (N1 to N6)
- six subzones that regulate the lot width, front, rear and side yard setbacks (A to F)

The subzones were developed to address the character of the neighbourhood, with subzone A being the most urban in character, and subzone F being the most suburban in character. This ensures a more streamlined and easy-to-follow zone and subzone structure compared to the current Zoning By-law 2008-250. This structure also links zones and subzones to a distinct "density" and "urban-suburban character" in accordance with the transect policies in Section 5 of the Official Plan.



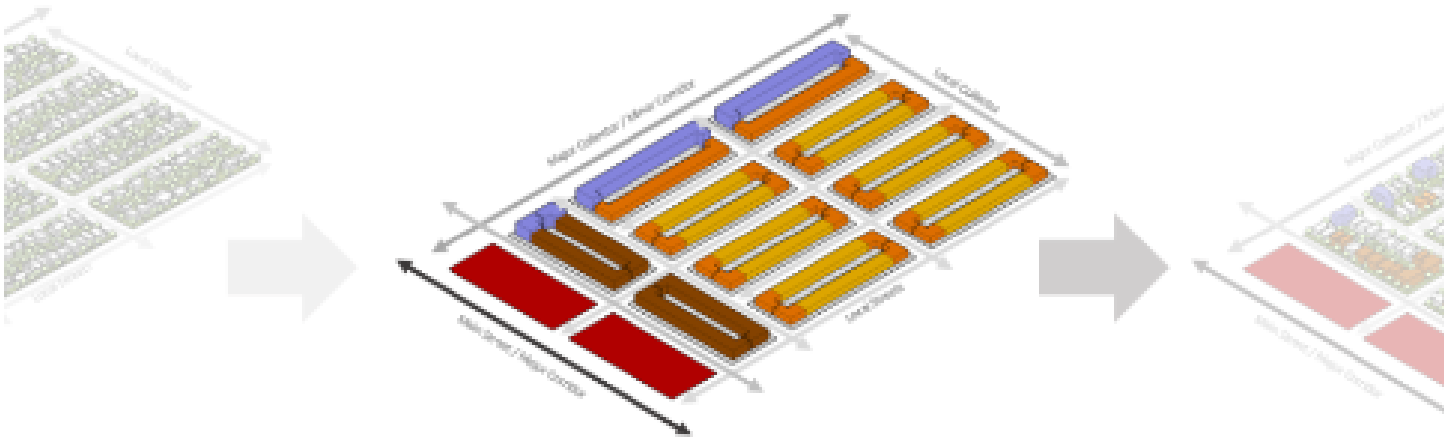
## Neighbourhood Uplift Zoning Strategy

As shown in the following slides, the Official Plan provides for higher densities in the Neighbourhood designation in areas that are in proximity to Corridors, Hubs and near rapid transit stations. These areas are designated in the Official Plan as the “Evolving Neighbourhood Overlay”. In the interiors of neighbourhoods, low-rise infill redevelopment is also supported by the Official Plan, but in a form that is more comparable to the existing neighbourhood context.



## Step 1

Initial assessment of the existing housing diversity and density, lot arrangements and key form characteristics in an existing neighbourhood.



## Step 2

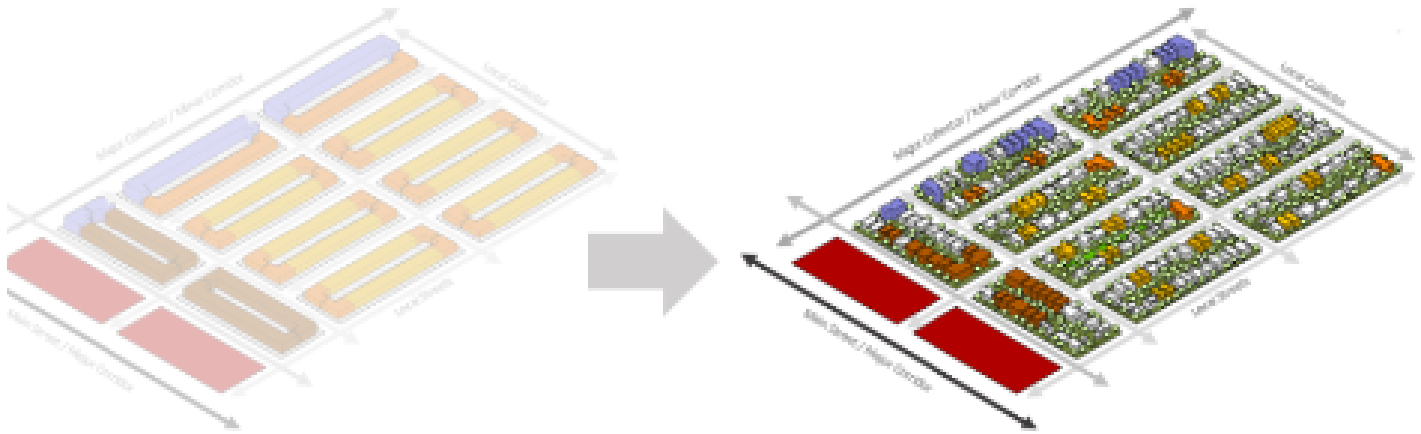
A combination of context-based zones are applied, tailored for the density and form outcome that is desired to be achieved.

**Blue areas in the diagram on the right represent:** Major height and density uplift on major collectors

**Brown areas in the diagram on the right represent:** Moderate height and density uplift near major corridors

**Orange areas in the diagram on the right represent:** Additional density uplift on the street corners and local collectors

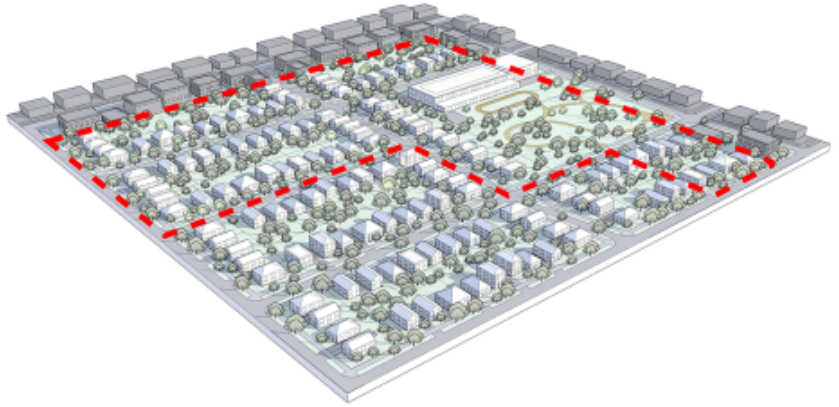
**Yellow areas in the diagram on the right represent:** Gentle density uplift on local streets and interior lots



### Step 3

The result is an increase in housing quantity and diversity, in a manner that is more respectful of existing context.

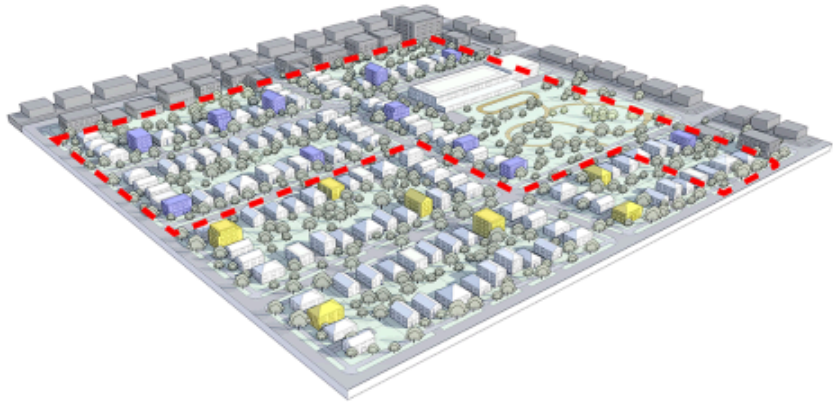
The diagram on right represent what new development might look like to 2046, the planning horizon of the Official Plan.



## **Inner Urban Neighbourhood**

The diagram on the right shows a hypothetical neighbourhood in the Inner Urban transect as it appears today.





### **Inner Urban Neighbourhood - 2046**

The diagram on the right shows the same hypothetical neighbourhood in the Inner Urban transect in 2046, the planning horizon of the Official Plan. The buildings shown in yellow and blue illustrate the number of buildings that are estimated to be redeveloped by 2046 (the “turnover” expected). The red-dashed line is the boundary of the Evolving Neighbourhood Overlay.



### **Inner Urban Transect Example**

R3R – Current Zoning By-law 2008-250

Min Front Yard Setback (m): 6

Min Corner Side Yard Setback (m): 4.5

Min Interior Side Yard Setback (m): 2.4 total, 1.2 for one side yard

Min Rear Yard Setback (m): 28% lot depth

Max Building Height (m): 10.7

The red area represents the permitted building envelope under the current Zoning By-law i.e. the area in which a building is permitted.



### **Inner Urban Transect Example**

N3C – New Zoning Bylaw - Draft 1

Min Front Yard Setback (m): 4.5

Exterior Side Yard

(currently corner side yard): 3

Min Total Interior Side Yard

Setback (m): 2.4

Min Rear Yard Setback (m): 28% lot depth

Max Building Height (m): 11

The orange area represents the permitted building envelope under the New Zoning By-law i.e. the area in which a building is permitted.



## **Outer Urban Neighbourhood**

The diagram on the right shows a hypothetical neighbourhood in the Outer Urban transect as it appears today.

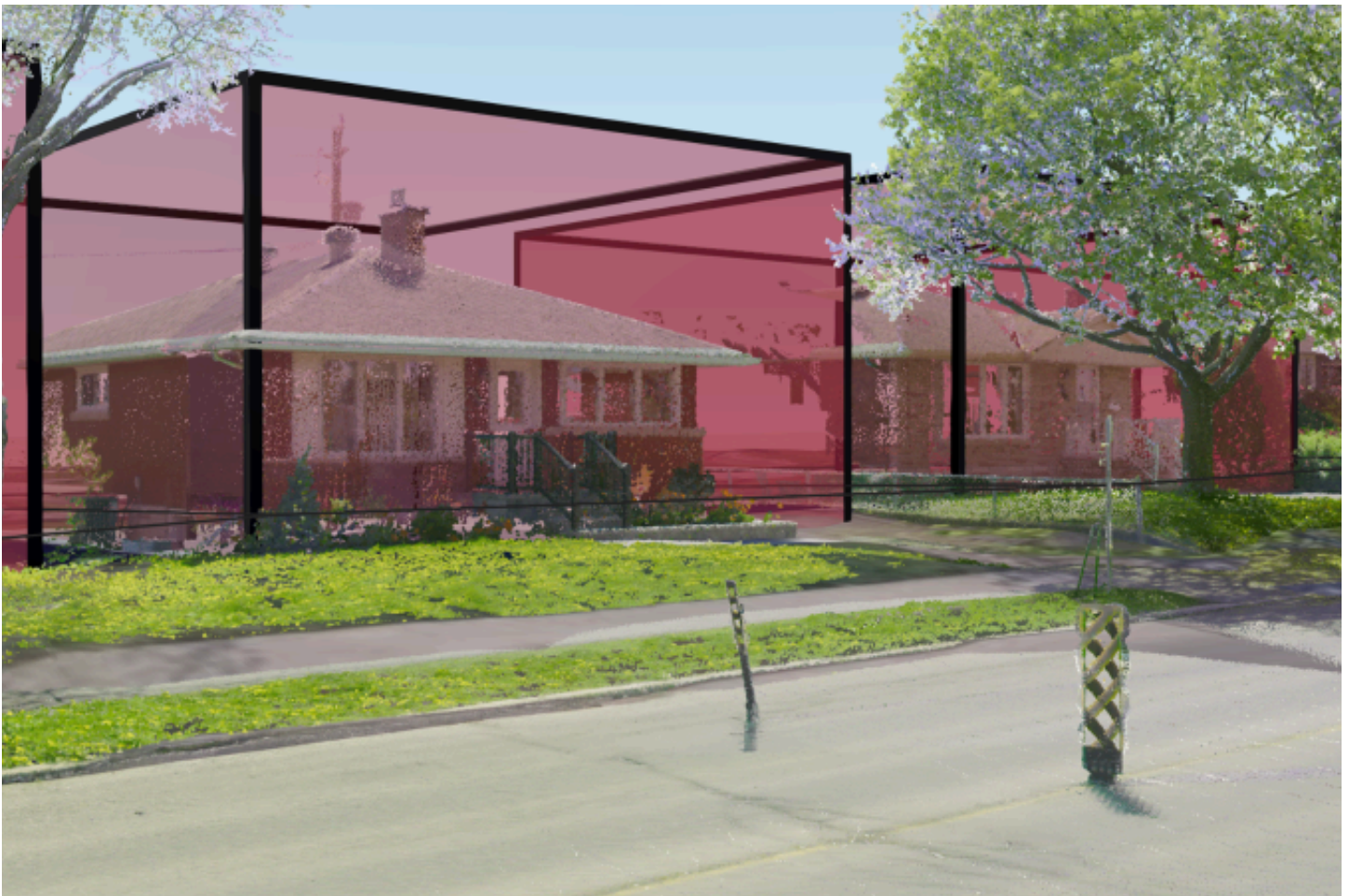


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### **Outer Urban Neighbourhood - 2046**

The diagram on the right shows the same hypothetical neighbourhood in the Outer Urban transect in 2046, the planning horizon of the Official Plan. The buildings shown in yellow and blue illustrate the number of buildings that are estimated to be redeveloped by 2046 (the “turnover rate”).

The red-dashed line is the boundary of the Evolving Neighbourhood Overlay.



### **Outer Urban Transect Example**

R10 – Current Zoning By-law 2008-250

Min Front Yard Setback (m): 6

Min Corner Side Yard Setback (m): 4.5

Min Interior Side Yard Setback (m): total is 3, with one yard,  
no less than 1.2

Min Rear Yard Setback (m): 28% lot depth

Max Building Height (m): 8

The red area represents the permitted building envelope under the current Zoning By-law i.e. the area in which a building is permitted.



### **Outer Urban Transect Example**

N2D – New Zoning Bylaw - Draft 1

Min Front Yard Setback (m): 6

Exterior Side Yard

(currently corner side yard): 4.5

Min Total Interior

Side Yard Setback (m): 3

Min Rear Yard Setback (m): 28% lot depth

Max Building Height (m): 8.5

The orange area represents the permitted building envelope under the New Zoning By-law i.e. the area in which a building is permitted.

### **Primary zones**

The new Neighbourhood zones are proposed to be structured into six primary zones that regulate the maximum height and density, and six subzones that regulate the lot width, front, rear and side yard setbacks. The subzones were developed to address the character of the neighbourhood, with subzone A being the most urban in character, and subzone F being the most suburban in character. This ensures a more streamlined and easy-to-follow zone and subzone structure compared to the current Zoning By-law 2008-250, but also links zones and subzones to a distinct "density" and "urban-suburban character" in accordance with the transect policies in Section 5 of the Official Plan.

### **Provisions for N1, N2, N3, N4, N5 and N6 Primary Zones**

The primary Neighbourhood zones (N1, N2, N3, N4, N5, N6) will regulate density using a maximum "units per hectare" (UPH) calculation. The N1-N4 zones are the successor to the low-rise R1-R4 zones. As the Neighbourhoods designation is intended to be predominantly low-rise (four storeys or less), these will be the predominant zones used in the Neighbourhood designation. The N5 and N6 zones are successors to the R5 zone, with N5 permitting mid-rise buildings (five to nine storeys) and N6 permitting high-rise buildings ten storeys and higher.



| <b>Zone</b>  | <b>N1</b> | <b>N2</b> |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| <b>(i) Maximum Density<br/>(Units Per Hectare)</b> | 60        | 150       |
| <b>(ii) Maximum Building Height (m)</b>            | 8.5       | 8.5       |

|  | <b>N3</b> | <b>N4</b> | <b>N5</b> |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|  | 250       | n/a       | n/a       |
|  | 11        | 14.5      | 30        |

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
|  | <b>N6</b>                 |
|  | n/a                       |
|  | As per suffix or schedule |

**Neighbourhood Subzones - Urban and Suburban  
Character**

Subzones (A, B, C, D, E, F) were developed to reflect neighbourhood character, based on attributes that define how urban or suburban its character is. These attributes are the lot width, front, rear and side yard setbacks that are typical in the neighbourhood. Attributes of "urban" and "suburban" character are defined in Table 6 of the Official Plan. The six subzones are organized from most "urban" to most "suburban" character, with subzone A representing "fully urban" and subzone F representing "fully suburban". Note that subzone-specific standards are intended to be consistent across all primary zones. For example, the same "B subzone" for lot width, front and side yard setbacks would apply to all of the N1B, N2B, N3B, N4B, N5B, and N6B subzones.

### **Provisions for Subzones A-F that apply to the N1, N2, N3, N4, N5, and N6 Zones**

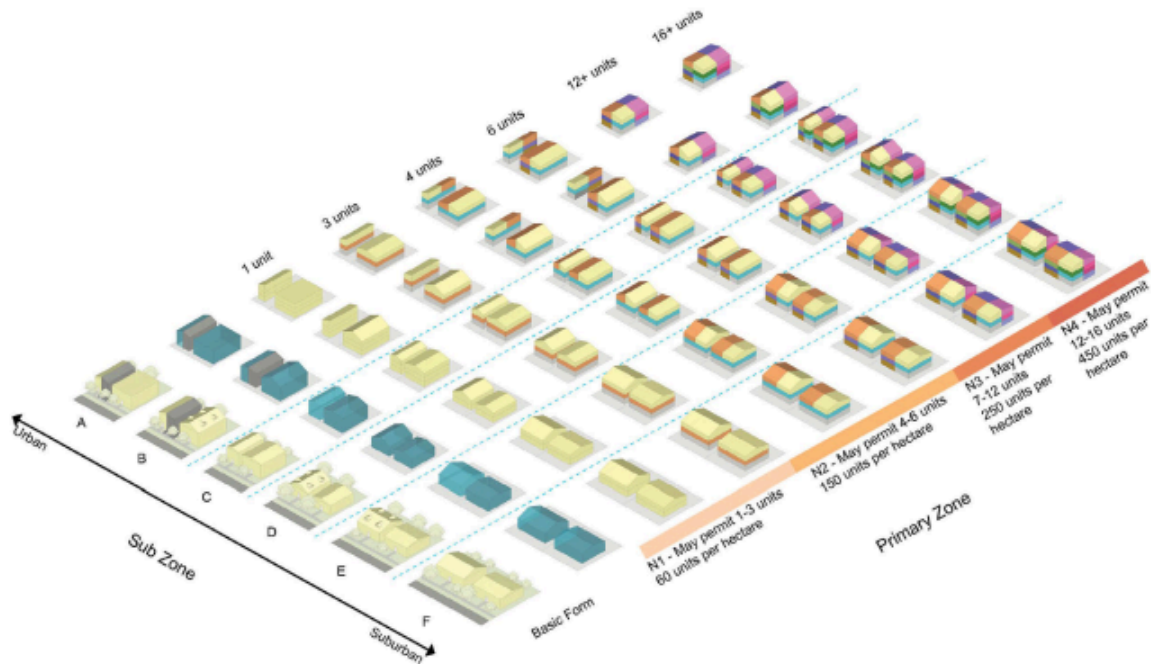
| <b>Subzone</b>   | <b>A</b>      | <b>B</b>      |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| <b>(i) Minimum Lot Width (m)</b>                               | 6             | 7.5           |
| <b>(ii) Minimum Lot Width per Vertically Attached Unit (m)</b> | 4.5           | 5.6           |
| <b>(iii) Minimum Front Yard Setback (m)</b>                    | 3             | 3             |
| <b>(iv) Minimum Exterior Side Yard Setback (m)</b>             | 3             | 3             |
| <b>(v) Minimum Total Interior Side Yard Setback (m)</b>        | 1.8           | 2.4           |
| <b>(vi) Maximum building width (m)</b>                         | n/a           | n/a           |
| <b>(vi) Minimum Rear Yard Setback</b>                          | 25% lot depth | 25% lot depth |

| <b>C</b>      | <b>D</b>      | <b>E</b>      |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 10            | 15            | 18            |
| 6             | 7.5           | 9             |
| 4.5           | 6             | 6             |
| 3             | 4.5           | 4.5           |
| 2.4           | 3             | 3.6           |
| n/a           | n/a           | 22            |
| 28% lot depth | 28% lot depth | 28% lot depth |

|          |
|----------|
| <b>F</b> |
| 24.5     |
| 9        |

|               |
|---------------|
| <b>F</b>      |
| 6             |
| 6             |
| 9             |
| 22            |
| 28% lot depth |

The above tables provide the provisions for the N1-N6 primary zones and subzones A-F. Note that the subzone provisions apply to each of the N1-N6 zones. For example, if a property is zoned N3C, the provisions of the N3 primary zone provide the maximum density and maximum building height, and the provisions of subzone C provide the minimum lot width, minimum front yard setback, minimum exterior side yard setback, minimum total interior side yard setback and minimum rear yard setback.



## Subzones

The diagram on the right illustrates the lot sizes, built form, and densities (including number of dwelling units) contemplated within the Neighbourhood primary zones and subzones. The subzones vary in terms of permitted lot width, as per the tables shown on above, however the diagram on the right generally assumes 30 m deep lots as is typical for many neighbourhoods.

For example, the D subzone shows 15 m wide x 30 m deep (450 sq m) lots. As per Official Plan direction, provided the minimum setbacks as well as built form and functional requirements are met, the By-law is intended to provide flexibility for the number of units permitted within that form.



The following diagrams provides a comparison of existing and proposed zoning provisions for various N zones. Note that properties in the Evolving Overlay contemplate a greater degree of change in permitted density and built form, and a three-storey height in this context is in accordance with Official Plan direction.

*The City's Digital Twin was used to model maximum building height and height transition provisions in three dimensions for N subzones using a mobile LiDAR scanner. The following are visual representation examples only.*



### **Downtown Core Transect Example**

R4UD – Current Zoning By-law 2008-250

Min Front Yard Setback (m): 3

Min Corner Side Yard Setback (m): 3

Min Interior Side Yard Setback (m): 1.5 each side

Min Rear Yard Setback (m): 30% lot depth

Max Building Height (m): 14.5

The red area represents the permitted building envelope under the current Zoning By-law i.e. the area in which a building is permitted.





### **Downtown Core Transect Example**

N4B – New Zoning Bylaw - Draft 1

Min Front Yard Setback (m): 3

Exterior Side Yard

(currently corner side yard): 3

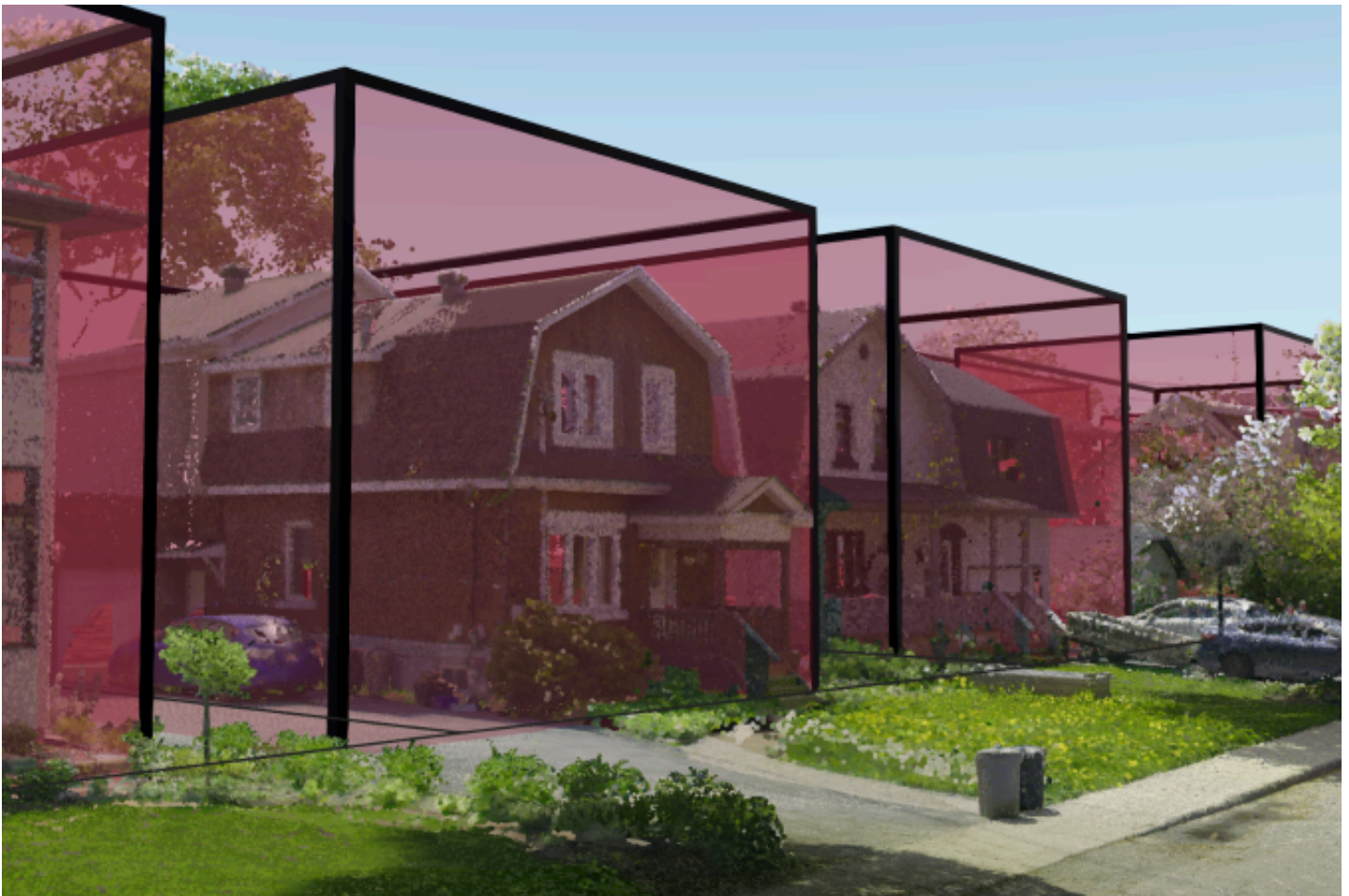
Min Total Interior

Side Yard Setback (m): 2.4

Min Rear Yard Setback (m): 28% lot depth

Max Building Height (m): 14.5

The orange area represents the permitted building envelope under the New Zoning By-law i.e. the area in which a building is permitted.



### **Inner Urban Transect Example**

R3I – Current Zoning By-law 2008-250

Min Front Yard Setback (m): 3

Min Corner Side Yard Setback (m): 3

Min Interior Side Yard Setback (m): 1.2 each side

Min Rear Yard Setback (m): 30% lot depth

Max Building Height (m): 10

The red area represents the permitted building envelope under the current Zoning By-law i.e. the area in which a building is permitted.



### **Inner Urban Transect Example**

N3C – New Zoning Bylaw - Draft 1

Min Front Yard Setback (m): 4.5

Min Corner Side Yard Setback (m): 3

Min Total Interior Side Yard Setback (m): 2.4

Min Rear Yard Setback (m): 28% lot depth

Max Building Height (m): 11

The orange area represents the permitted building envelope under the New Zoning By-law i.e. the area in which a building is permitted.



### **Outer Urban Transect Example**

R1GG – Current Zoning By-law 2008-250

Min Front Yard Setback (m): 6

Min Corner Side Yard Setback (m): 4.5

Min Interior Side Yard Setback (m): 1.8 each side

Min Rear Yard Setback (m): 28% lot depth

Max Building Height (m): 8

The red area represents the permitted building envelope under the current Zoning By-law i.e. the area in which a building is permitted.



### **Outer Urban Transect Example**

N2E – New Zoning Bylaw - Draft 1

Min Front Yard Setback (m): 6

Exterior Side Yard

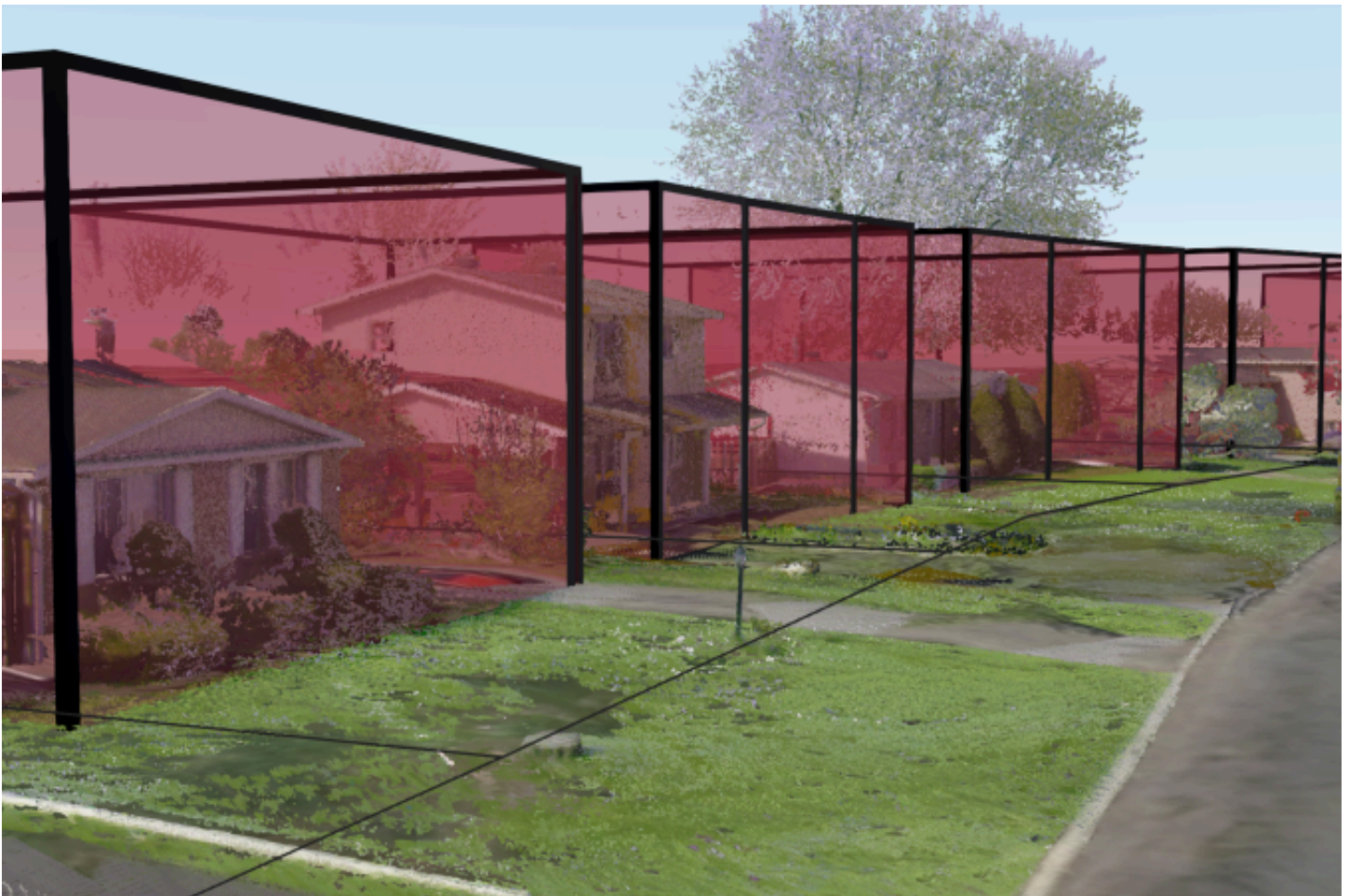
(currently corner side yard): 4.5

Min Total Interior Side Yard Setback (m): 3.6

Min Rear Yard Setback (m): 28% lot depth

Max Building Height (m): 8.5

The orange area represents the permitted building envelope under the New Zoning By-law i.e. the area in which a building is permitted.



### **Suburban Transect Example**

R1HH – Current Zoning By-law 2008-250

Min Front Yard Setback (m): 6

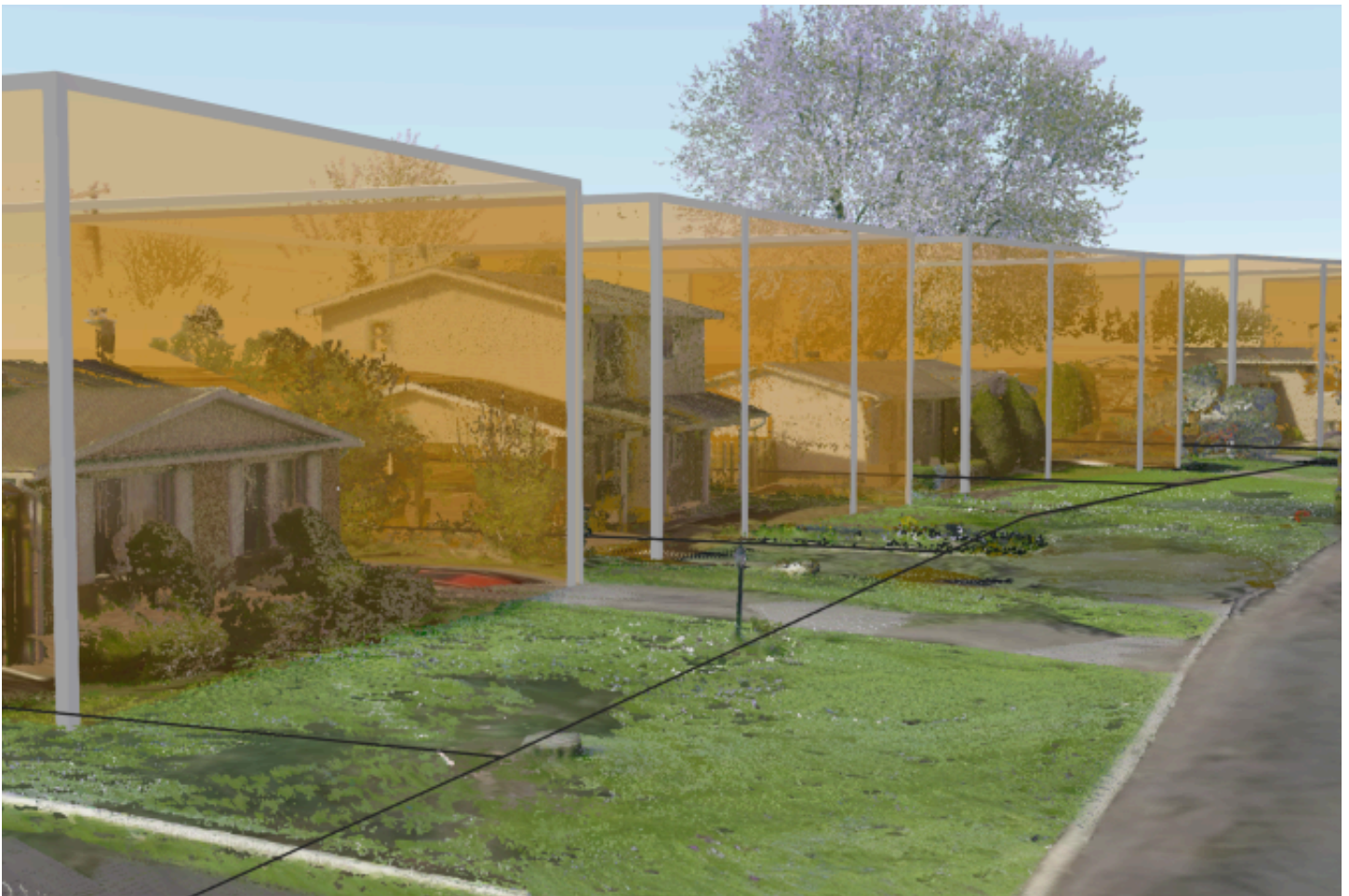
Min Corner Side Yard Setback (m): 4.5

Min Interior Side Yard Setback (m): 1.8 each side

Min Rear Yard Setback (m): 28% lot depth

Max Building Height (m): 9.5

The red area represents the permitted building envelope under the current Zoning By-law i.e. the area in which a building is permitted.



### **Suburban Transect Example**

N1E – New Zoning Bylaw - Draft 1

Min Front Yard Setback (m): 6

Exterior Side Yard

(currently corner side yard): 4.5

Min Total Interior Side Yard Setback (m): 3.6

Min Rear Yard Setback (m): 28% lot depth

Max Building Height (m): 8.5

The orange area represents the permitted building envelope under the New Zoning By-law i.e. the area in which a building is permitted.

The process of mapping the proposed locations of the Neighbourhood zones is detailed in [Document 10 – Neighbourhood \(N1-N6\) Zones and Provisions](#). In general, this involved a four-step process that included conversion of the existing primary zones and subzones into new zones, and

application of Official Plan policies, in particular transect-specific and Evolving Neighbourhood Overlay policies, to align zoning with the intended directions set out in the new Plan.

You can learn more about the project and how to get involved by visiting the project website: [engage.ottawa.ca/zoning](https://engage.ottawa.ca/zoning)

Through the new Zoning By-law project, the City is developing a Digital Twin – a virtual, three-dimensional representation of Ottawa – that can be used to model and simulate the city. The model will provide users with a fully immersive and interactive 3D representation of the entire urban environment – from buildings and roads to hydrants and trees – enabling them to explore the entire, complex environment.

The Digital Twin is being developed in stages and aims to deploy a public interface for the Digital Twin planned in **late 2025**.