

1770 Heatherington Road - Zoning By-law Amendment

Planning Rationale Report

2026-04-14

Introduction

The City of Ottawa's Affordable Housing Branch has prepared this Planning Rationale Report in support of a Zoning By-law Amendment application for City owned lands at 1770 Heatherington Road ("site") in Ward 10. The intent of the application is to rezone the northern and western portions of the site to permit mid-rise buildings to support the creation of additional housing units. This application does not propose zoning amendments to lands zoned for greenspace or institutional uses, or to the southern portion of the site, as outlined below.

The subject site is 3.2 hectares in size and largely vacant, apart from the Boys and Girls Club Taggart Parkes Family Clubhouse, which is located on the eastern boundary of the site fronting onto Heatherington Road. Commercial uses associated with Walkley Road abut the site to the north and west, with residential neighbourhoods that include taller apartment buildings located to the south and east of the site.

A City-initiated Draft Plan of Subdivision (DPS) application (D07-16-24-0017) is underway to support a family-focused housing development on the vacant portion of the site, as well as introduce a new public park and a new public right-of-way that will afford municipal frontage to the future development blocks interior to the site. A Zoning By-law Amendment (D02-02-24-0021) was approved in September 2024 to rezone the site from *G1[2663], General Industrial Subzone 1, Exception 2663* to *R4M (Residential Fourth Density, Subzone M), O1 (Parks and Open Space), and I1 (Minor Institutional)* zones with site-specific exceptions. A comprehensive Planning Rationale and Design Brief was prepared in support of the DPS and Zoning By-law Amendment applications, dated June 2024. Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) has recently submitted minor Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Control applications for the proposed apartment buildings directly fronting Heatherington Road, which are under review with Planning, Development, and Building Services.

The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment applies to approximately 1.18 hectares of the greater site, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 - Lands Subject to Zoning By-law Amendment (Outlined by black dashed line)



Description of Proposed Development

The initial concept plan for the site, prepared by CSV Architects (2024-03-13), proposed two (2) low-rise apartments, five (5) blocks of townhouses, sixteen (16) stacked townhouse units, and three (3) semi-detached dwellings for a combined total of 158 dwelling units and a new 3,237 m² park.

This Zoning By-law Amendment application proposes to expand the housing options proposed on site by including permissions for mid-rise buildings on the northern and western portions of the site whereas the current zoning only permits up to low-rise apartment buildings. An updated concept plan is being prepared by CSV Architects which may necessitate site-specific zoning amendments.

The following revisions are anticipated to the 2024-03-13 concept for the site, however, will be confirmed following finalization of the updated concept plan to be issued shortly:

- The northern portion is proposed to accommodate mid-rise buildings up to six (6) storeys in height, as opposed to townhouses units;
- The western portion of the site is proposed to accommodate mid-rise buildings up to six (6) storeys in height or stacked townhouse units, as opposed to semi-detached and townhouse units; and,
- The southern portion of the site is proposed to accommodate entirely stacked townhouse units, as opposed to a mix of townhouse units and stacked townhouse units.

It is understood that OCH has a standard six (6) storey building footprint that provides 45 units, of which 22 units (49%) are three-bedroom, 12 units (27%) are two-bedroom, and 11 units (24%) are one-bedroom. Assuming two or three mid-rise buildings are proposed on site, this would result in approximately 90 – 135 units. For the proposed stacked townhouses, it is understood that five (5) blocks are being contemplated in the revised concept, each containing 12 units, for a total of 60 new units. Within each stacked townhouse block, four (4) of the units (33%) are anticipated to be designed as four-bedroom units and eight (8) of the units (67%) as three-bedroom units. This unit distribution maintains the intent of establishing a family-oriented development and will add significantly more housing to the site than originally proposed, while ensuring appropriate transitions to adjacent areas. It is understood that the intention is for the proposed units to be affordable housing units, however, the exact approach will be confirmed with OCH.

Based on the introduction of mid-rise buildings and additional stacked townhouses, the revised concept could provide between 150 to 195 units on site, excluding the proposed apartments fronting Heatherington Road that are subject to separate applications. An updated concept plan is being prepared to demonstrate the above revisions. The DPS for the site and associated materials will be updated appropriately to reflect the revised concept.

The proposed revisions also seek to better address the soil conditions and stormwater management control challenges faced on site than the existing concept plan due to design opportunities to mitigate these challenges. Additionally, the inclusion of mid-rise buildings as opposed to townhouses will support increasing the affordability of the units, as this building typology is more cost effective to build and maintain.

It should be noted that the final site configuration and specific building locations will be determined through detailed design and a further examination of soil conditions. Notwithstanding, the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application seeks to expand housing permissions on site to further support the City in meeting its intensification and affordability targets, as detailed herein.

Policy Framework

The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application is consistent with Provincial policy as it will support the development of a complete community within a *settlement area*, providing a range of residential building typologies to support families. The following section evaluates the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application against the City of Ottawa Official Plan and Zoning By-laws.

City of Ottawa Official Plan (2022)

Schedule A of the City of Ottawa Official Plan (OP) identifies the site as being within the *Outer Urban Transect*. Schedule B3 designates the site as *Neighbourhood*, subject to an *Evolving Neighbourhood Overlay*. The *Neighbourhood* designation allows for a variety of building types and densities to assist with promoting “missing-middle” housing and the development of “15-minute neighborhoods”, as outlined under Section 4 of the OP. The *Evolving Neighbourhood Overlay* applies to areas in close proximity to *Hubs* and *Corridors*, signalling a gradual evolution in character over time to support intensification. More broadly, Section 2.2.1 of the OP provides direction for intensification and diversifying housing options, highlighting the need for opportunities within *Neighbourhoods* to accommodate larger households within typologies that increase densities on the existing lots that are a short walking distance to *Hubs*. Section 4.2 of the OP pertains to housing, emphasizing the need to enable greater flexibility and adequate supply of housing options, including maximizing ability to provide affordable housing.

The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application conforms with the general and land use policies of the OP as it will introduce more housing options adjacent to a *Hub*, including middle missing housing, housing for larger households, and affordable housing units, and in proximity to transit and active transportation infrastructure, in accordance with the OP.

Table 7 of the OP states that building heights for lands designated as *Neighbourhoods* within the *Outer Urban Transect* will be of a low rise built form with zoning generally permitting no more than four (4) storeys. Notwithstanding this height limit, Policy 6.3.1 of the OP provides policy exceptions that are applicable to the proposed development and associated Zoning By-law Amendments:

6.3.1.2) *Permitted building heights in Neighbourhoods shall be Low-rise except:*

- a) *Where existing zoning or secondary plans allow for greater building heights; or*
- b) *In areas already characterized by taller buildings within the Neighbourhood designation.*

6.3.1.3) *Development in the Neighbourhood designation which seeks additional height beyond 4 storeys:*

- a) *May be evaluated through a Zoning By-law amendment, without the need to amend this Plan, in cases that fall under the provisions of Subsection 6.3.1 Policy 2) but where zoning does not provide corresponding provisions.*

Within the vicinity of the site, there are a range or six (6), eleven, and fifteen-storey apartment buildings in *Neighbourhood*-designated areas, as well as several *Neighbourhood*-designated areas that are zoned for heights of 18 metres and 21 metres under Zoning By-law 2008-250. Given the proximity of these existing buildings, the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment is appropriate as the mid-rise buildings would be compatible with the character of the area and would not necessitate an Official Plan Amendment in accordance with Policies 6.3.1.2 and 6.3.1.3 of the OP.

Policy 6.3.1.5 provides that the Zoning By-law will distribute permitted densities in the *Neighbourhood* as follows:

- a) *Allowing higher densities and permitted heights, including predominantly apartment and shared accommodation forms, in areas closer to, but not limited to, rapid-transit stations, Corridors and major neighbourhood amenities.*
- b) *Allowing lower densities and ground-oriented dwelling forms further away from rapid-transit stations, Corridors, and major neighbourhood amenities; and,*
- c) *Provide for a gradation and transition in permitted densities and mix of housing types between areas described in a) and b).*

The proposed development is located within 100 metres of Walkley Road, which is designated as a *Corridor – Mainstreet* under Schedule B3 the OP. The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment would permit mid-rise buildings on the portions of the site closest to this *Corridor*, in accordance with Policy 6.3.1.5 a). The resulting distribution of density on site directly aligns with Policies 6.3.1.5 b) and c) as it will allow for a transition down in density towards lower densities and away from the *Corridor*.

Lands abutting the portion of the sites proposed to be rezoned through this application are designated as *Hub* to the north and *Arterial Mainstreet* to the west, with Walkley Road being identified as a *Corridor*. Pursuant to the OP, the introduction of mid-rise buildings adjacent to these areas will ensure compatible development and appropriate transitions to surrounding land uses.

The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment conforms with the Official Plan as it will appropriately increase building heights on site to allow for modest intensification that is compatible with the surrounding *Neighbourhood* and adjacent *Hub* fabric. The introduction of additional housing units will support the direction of the OP to integrate missing middle housing and support the creation of a complete community.

City of Ottawa Zoning By-law

It is understood that development applications are to be reviewed against both Zoning By-law 2008-250 and Zoning By-law 2026-50 until such time that By-law 2026-50 is approved by the Ontario Land Tribunal. The following section summarizes the current zoning for the site under both By-laws and the proposed amendments.

Zoning By-law 2008-250

Zoning By-law 2008-250 currently zones the site as *Residential Fourth Density Zone, Subzone M, Exception 2982, (R4M [2982]), Parks and Open Space (O1), and Minor Institutional Zone Exception 25 (I1 [2983])*.

Exception 2982 permits a parking rate of 0.25 per unit for low-rise apartment dwelling, with all other residential uses complying with Area B standards outlined in Section 101. Within the *R4* Zone, Table 101 requires a minimum of 0.5 parking space per dwelling unit for stacked townhouses, 0.75 spaces per dwelling unit for townhouses, and 1 space per dwelling unit for semi-detached houses. Exception 2983 provides a maximum gross floor area of 1,700 m² for a recreation and athletic facility, a minimum parking requirement of 30 spaces for the community centre, and no required loading spaces. Table 162A outlines the Zone Provisions for the “M” subzone. Once the concept is finalized, the revised proposal will be reviewed against applicable provisions to determine if any site-specific minor amendments are required to the proposed zoning.

The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment only applies to the portion of the lands zoned *R4M* at the northern and western portion of the site, as shown in Figure 1. The *R4M* zone allows for low-rise development, including stacked townhouses, and seeks to regulate development in a manner that is compatible to existing land use patterns to maintain or enhance the residential character of a neighbourhood.

Zoning By-law 2026-50

The site is currently zoned *Neighbourhood Zone 4, C, Exception 2982 (N4C [2982])*, *Greenspace Zone (GRN)*, and *Institutional Zone, Exception 2983 (INZ [2983])* under Zoning By-law 2026-50. Similar to the *R4M* zone, the maximum permitted building height within the *N4C zone* is 14.5 metres. Exceptions 2982 and 2983 were carried forward into By-law 2026-50 as they apply to the subject site. Table 801B outlines zoning provisions for the “C” subzones. Once the concept is finalized, the revised proposal will be reviewed against applicable provisions to determine if any site-specific minor amendments are required to the proposed zoning.

Requested Zoning By-law Amendments

The following Zoning By-law Amendments are being requested for the portion of the site shown in Figure 1:

- **By-law 2008-250:**
 - Rezone from *Residential Fourth Density Zone [2982]* under Zoning By-law 2008-250 to *Residential Fifth Density Zone [XX]*, with a maximum permitted building height of 21.0 metres; and,
 - Include existing provision for 0.25 space minimum parking requirement to apply to the mid-rise buildings under Exception [XX].
- **By-law 2026-50:**
 - Rezone from *Neighbourhood Zone 4C [2982]* under Zoning By-law 2026-50 to *Neighbourhood Zone 5C [XX]*.

It is understood that the new Zoning By-Law 2026-50 does not include minimum resident parking requirements, therefore the exception for reduced parking for the mid-rise buildings has not been included in the proposed zoning for By-Law 2026-50.

The proposed *R5B [XX]* zone would increase permitted building heights from 14.5 metres to 21 metres, which could accommodate a six-storey building and is in keeping with zoning of neighbouring areas under By-law 2008-250. The proposed *N5C* zone permits building heights up to 30 storeys under By-law 2026-50 and reflects the zoning for surrounding neighbourhood areas. These proposed Zoning By-law Amendments are therefore appropriate for the subject site as they are compatible with the surrounding area, allowing future buildings to be situated to ensure appropriate transitions to surrounding uses.

The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application is in keeping with zoning of *Neighbourhood* areas to the east and west and will ensure a transition in density towards the south, which are zoned for lower density under both Zoning By-laws. No changes to the *Open Space* or *Institutional Zones* are proposed. The southern portion of the site will also remain as the *RM4* zone and *N4C* zone, respectively, as stacked townhouses are permitted within these zones and to establish an appropriate transition in density to lands to the south.

Summary of Conclusions

It is our professional opinion that the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application is appropriate for the site as follows:

- Consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement 2024 which promotes complete communities and a diversity of housing types;
- Conforms with the general and land use policies of the OP as it will appropriately intensify the site and introduce more housing options, including affordable and middle missing housing, adjacent to a *Hub* and in proximity to transit and active transportation infrastructure;
- Conforms with Section 2.2.1 of the OP by providing housing options for larger households, with the proposed mid-rise buildings allowing for the majority of units to be 3-bedrooms;
- Conforms with the OP as the proposed building typologies are compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood fabric;
- Conforms with Policy 6.3.2.1 of the OP which allows for increased building heights beyond four storeys through a Zoning By-law Amendment application in *Neighbourhoods* where taller buildings exist with *Neighbourhood* designated areas;
- Proposes zoning that is consistent with adjacent neighbourhood areas to the east and west while transitioning down to the lower density residential zones to the south of the site; and,
- Meets the general intent of the Zoning By-laws to facilitate appropriate intensification of an underutilized site, ensuring appropriate zoning standards are achieved.

The proposed development will facilitate over 150 new residential units on city lands that are currently vacant and near commercial and institutional uses to appropriately intensify the site, with the proposed Amendments being in the public interest.

Sincerely,



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