

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
777 Bay Street 17th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

Date: November 22, 2025

**RE: 025-1100 Consultation on Minimum Lot Sizes – Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act 2025**

This letter represents the City of Ottawa's response to the discussion questions posted for [ERO 025-1100](#). This consultation seeks comments from municipalities to better understand the impact of minimum lot size requirements on urban residential lands and the ability to provide housing options, improved affordability, and expanded access to homeownership across Ontario. Ottawa has recently released the final draft of its new zoning by-law. The final draft by-law includes systematic change to reduce prescriptiveness, complexity and over-regulation through zoning, to support housing affordability and availability. Over 140 standards for urban residential development (including lot size) have been simplified into approximately 26.

On October 8, 2025, Ottawa City Council unanimously approved a bold, comprehensive strategy to combat the housing crisis by removing barriers and deploying all available tools to increase housing supply and affordability. The plan includes simplifying and speeding up approvals, promoting a housing-friendly culture at City Hall, and targeting development near transit with revised zoning regulations. The plan stems from the Housing Innovation Task Force and includes 53 actions focused on streamlining approvals, updating zoning by-laws, and activating city-owned land. The plan also targets major growth with a goal of building 118,000 new households by 2035. Overall, the plan combines policy reform, financial tools, and land activation to boost housing supply and affordability across Ottawa.

**What are your thoughts on the benefits and/or risks associated with reducing or removing minimum lot size requirements in low-density urban residential areas to encourage gentle density, increase housing supply, broaden housing options and encourage home ownership?**

Recognizing the impact minimum lot area requirements have on the ability to provide housing, Ottawa's final draft zoning by-law already proposes to eliminate minimum lot area within the *neighbourhood* (urban residential) zones. Instead, the lower-density neighbourhood zones apply maximum limits on the number of units. In contrast, minimum lot width requirements are important to ensure a minimum amount of space around buildings to access roofs, maintain walls and access services, and reduce risk by putting space between stand-alone buildings. Lot width is a requirement in the final draft by-law to provide these functional necessities and support health and safety.

**Are there any circumstances where having established minimum lot sizes in municipal zoning by-laws for low-density urban residential parcels are absolutely necessary with respect to the provision of transportation, infrastructure, or upholding public health and safety?**

Lot width requirements ensure properties can be safely accessed and serviced, and should be expressly permitted. Even in the case of rowhouses or for other vertically attached buildings where one unit does not directly face the street, requirements for lot width ensure water and sewer connections have enough room to reach the building, and provide a means (in the minimum width required) to maintain those same services when that becomes necessary.

**Given the Ontario context and the government's permissions for additional residential units, what do you suggest should be the smallest size urban residential lot in terms of lot area, frontage or depth (i.e. six metre frontage, 200 square metres area, etc.) What would be the opportunities and limitations? How would these standards work together?**

The smallest lot width staff have proposed in Ottawa's final draft Zoning By-law for a vertically attached (rowhouse or semi-detached) unit, is 4.5 metres. For a stand-alone building, the requirement would be 6.0 metres to account for side yards necessary to provide sufficient space to access and maintain buildings and provide separation. The proposed 4.5 metre minimum lot width incorporates sufficient space for services, the associated maintenance trench (when needed in the future), driveways, and walkways.

**What other zoning requirements or performance standards could be needed to support any reduction or removal of minimum lot size requirements on low-density urban residential parcels (i.e., additional residential units, multiplexes, parking requirements, lot coverage, height and density etc.)?**

In the context of a removal of minimum lot sizes, it is important to maintain enough space to provide the functional necessities of a development on properties. Lower-density urban residential zones in the final draft of Ottawa's zoning by-law introduce maximum density limits. We suggest that minimum lot width and maximum density requirements could replace minimum lot area on serviced urban residential lots to increase housing supply, affordability and choice while supporting health and safety.

Sincerely,

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