

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

Date: November 22, 2025

RE: 025-1101 Consultation on Enhanced Development Standards – Lot Level (outside of buildings)

This letter represents the City of Ottawa's response to [ERO 025-1101](#). This consultation seeks comment from municipalities on 'enhanced lot level development standards', through zoning by-laws, site plan control and agreements as a condition of approval, that require development to provide features on a property outside of a building and beyond basic requirements of health and safety. The standards may include requirements for bicycle parking, landscaping or permeable pavement.

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 homes by 2035. Overall, the plan combines policy reform, financial tools, and land activation to boost housing supply and affordability across Ottawa. This consultation directly aligns with direction in the City's [Housing Acceleration Plan](#) (item #11) to review the City's Development Application Study Policy and the threshold for Site Plan Control approval.

With respect to [ERO 025-1101](#) specifically, Ottawa is taking an ambitious approach to streamline development by removing site plan control for more projects—having already exempted buildings up to 12 units in October (which goes beyond what is the current provincial exemption of 10 units), and now considering even higher thresholds for site plan exemption based on Council direction, The City's new draft Zoning By-law will also eliminate parking minimums and maximize lot coverage to help support housing supply.

However, for complex infill projects with larger unit counts, site plans remain critical to address landscaping, drainage, and placement of shared amenities like waste facilities, ensuring compatibility with surrounding properties and potentially reducing future issues. Similarly, for large-scale redevelopments—such as transit-oriented communities or former shopping

plazas—site planning is essential to manage servicing constraints, underground utilities, and traffic patterns, enabling cohesive design and functional urban spaces. The following are the City of Ottawa's response to discussion questions posted for comment on the consultation for [ERO 025-1101](#).

In your experience, are enhanced development standards applied consistently across municipalities? Please provide examples where possible.

Enhanced standards for development are enacted by municipalities through various tools, such as site plan control approvals or zoning by-law requirements. Many municipalities have basic requirements for features like turf landscaping where a property is not covered by driveways, or requirements for walkways, that support safe access to properties while limiting drainage issues, for example.

Ottawa has already shifted from requiring enhanced standards following the exemption of 12 unit developments from site plan control. The ability to regulate development on large properties, for complex infill proposals, and development near transit, retaining the authority to regulate the lot-level features and layout would still be desirable.

What types of standards, should municipalities be allowed to apply outside of buildings and how do these requirements maintain the health and safety of the site if at all?

Some municipal requirements for properties outside of any buildings have practical benefits to health and safety for residents.

Where large shopping plazas or transit-oriented areas are redeveloped, lot-level standards are crucial to manage how people move through the denser and walkable areas they become. These standards also ensure that goods can efficiently get to market. Lot-level standards that achieve these practical outcomes for large-scale development are often applied through zoning, or as a site plan control approval requirement. While the City requires permits to extend driveway access to the public road right-of-way, those permits are not sufficient to address the safe and efficient movement of goods and people in the interior of properties. Requirements for truck loading space, pedestrian walkways, and standards for the retrieval of waste internal to properties are important considerations to maintain for new development.

Municipalities also operate at the scale where climate impacts, infrastructure pressures, and environmental conditions are most directly experienced. Site plan control also municipalities to influence climate resiliency, environmental performance, or tree survival (e.g., soil depth, tree preservation, species selection, grading impacts, landscaping, stormwater performance beyond established thresholds).

Development standards at the site level have helped the City of Ottawa address issues like declining tree canopy, localized flooding, extreme heat, and soil degradation, while protecting municipal assets, enhancing public safety, and enabling reliable service delivery.

As part of the City's broader effort to streamline development by removing site plan control for more projects, the City is also simplifying and modernizing its tree protection standards. The goal is to accelerate housing while still ensuring that essential natural features—such as trees, soil, and vegetation—can perform their basic functions in managing heat, stormwater, and site stability.

Sincerely,

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