Infill Housing Construction Guidelines

"Infill housing construction" refers to construction on residential sites located in established neighbourhoods, either on existing vacant lots or with the demolition of an existing structure to accommodate the construction of a new structure. This includes single detached houses, semi-detached houses, duplexes as well as multi-unit residential complexes. Due to the proximity of infill construction sites to existing properties and structures, neighbouring properties may be impacted.

Concerns most often reported include:

- Public safety on and around the building/construction site
- Potential damage to neighbouring properties
- Improper site drainage
- Unsightly and scattered construction debris
- Storage of demolition and building construction materials
- Blocked lanes, sidewalks and roadways

Proper planning, site-specific considerations, and communicating with neighbours in advance of demolition and construction activities will reduce issues, complaints, and minimize risks to the public and neighbouring properties.

Permits

Development, demolition and building permits are required for infill housing construction. The permits and their associated approvals (e.g. variance, plan approval, etc.) must be in place prior to the start of demolition and/or construction. Demolition permits can only be applied for by a licensed demolition contractor.

A "Use of Street Permit" must be obtained from Public Works prior to blocking any street or public right of way. Additional information is available at Permits - Public Works.

Public Safety

Property owners and builders are responsible for public safety during all stages of demolition, excavation and construction.

As soon as demolition or construction begins, the site must be fenced with a continuous six foot high metal fence installed around the perimeter of the site to prevent access by unauthorized persons. The fence must be situated entirely on the construction site and cannot extend beyond any property lines. If the neighbouring property owners refuse access to their property, it is the contractor's responsibility to find an alternate means to install and maintain the security fence. This fence shall

remain in place until the structure is completed and secured, the excavations have been backfilled, and building materials are no longer being stored on the site.

A house number, visible from the street, must be maintained on the site at all times until construction is completed. This is necessary for emergency personnel, contractors, City staff and inspectors.

Mitigating Damage

All contractors have an obligation to take steps to minimize the risk of damage to neighbouring properties and structures. Proper soil stabilization may be required on the sides of an excavation when in close proximity to neighbouring properties. This may include engineered shoring to protect adjacent structures and foundations, or confirmation from an engineer that shoring is not required.

The Housing Plan Examination Branch requires an engineer's report and drawings for demolition and excavation in any of the following conditions:

- When the building being demolished is closer than eight feet to an adjacent building
- When the building being demolished is closer than four feet to a property line
- Where the edge of excavation for the new construction is four feet or less to the property line
- Where, due to specific site conditions, it has been identified that demolition or excavation warrants additional consideration and planning (e.g.: structure collapse)

The engineer's report and drawings must detail how the existing structure will be safely demolished, and how the excavation site and neighbouring properties and/or buildings will be protected. All engineer's reports must be accompanied by a Professional Designer's Certificate for Housing (PDCH).

Contractors should clearly communicate risks to nearby property owners and provide contact information to address issues quickly. It is the responsibility of both the property owner and contractor to repair all damages caused by them or their sub-trades during the demolition and construction process. Damage deposits may be retained by the City to repair public infrastructure.

Property Drainage

When a lot is under construction, storm runoff must be managed in such a way as to avoid negative effects on neighbouring properties. Additional information is available at Water & Waste - Residential Lot Grading.

Material Storage

The property owner and contractor are responsible for ensuring all construction materials and debris are properly stored on the construction site and off public walkways/roads/boulevards and secured or contained in bins or containers. Loose debris and materials are not permitted.

Posting of plans

City-reviewed (stamped) plans must be kept onsite at all times during demolition and construction activities. Inspectors are authorized to reschedule an inspection when plans are not available onsite, and additional fees may be applied. Any deviation from approved plans, including substitution of materials, must be submitted for review and approval to the Housing Plan Examination Branch. Additional fees may be applied.

Arrange for mandatory inspections

If construction doesn't immediately follow demolition, the following inspections must be requested:

1. Pre-backfill – when all demolition debris, including all foundation materials (if applicable) have been removed from the site and before any fill is placed in the excavation or any reconstruction has commenced;
2. Final – when the site is in a safe, level, well graded condition after demolition has been completed.

If construction immediately follows demolition, the following inspections must be requested:

1. Preserved wood foundation (if applicable);
2. Pipe and pit (underground plumbing): Sump pit and all interior foundation drainage lines are installed and adequately sloped to the sump pit; all domestic waste water (sewer) lines that are to be located below the basement floor slab are complete and adequately sloped;
3. All trades (post-framing and rough in): prior to covering any structural, electrical and/or plumbing work performed under the permit;
4. Pre-boarding inspection: insulation and air/vapour barrier are complete and sealed;
5. Final: all work is complete under all permits related to the work being done, home is ready for occupancy.