



MODIFICATIONS TO THE EXISTING RESIDENTIAL “ER” ZONE IN THE TOWN OF ANCASTER ZONING BY-LAW 87-57

DATA ANALYSIS OF THE “ER” ZONE

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**PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
PLANNING DIVISION**

Data Analysis of the “ER” Zone

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to present the data that staff used to analyze the existing context in the “ER” Zone and develop the recommended regulatory framework to address issues of overbuilding in the “ER” Zone. The following information is included:

- **Part 1:** Overview of characteristics of existing lots and dwellings in the “ER” Zone;
- **Part 2:** Overview of recent development activity in the “ER” zone, including demolitions, new construction, and additions between 2012 and 2017; and,
- **Part 3:** Analysis of minor variances granted in the “ER” Zone between 2012 and 2017.

Part 1: Characteristics of Existing Lots and Dwellings in the “ER” Zone

Planning Units

There are approximately 2,500 lots in the “ER Zone.” Parcels are located in the Clearview, Garner, Hamilton Golf and Country Club, Leeming, Lime Kiln, Marritt, Old Mill, Shaver, Spring Valley, St. John’s, and Sulphur Springs planning units (please see Appendix “A” to Report PED18036 for the location map of planning units). Table 1 identifies the distribution and average size of lots in the “ER” Zone by planning unit.

Table 1 – “ER” Zone Parcels by Planning Unit

Planning Unit	Number of Parcels	Average Lot Size (m ²)
Clearview (includes the Oakes subdivision)	305	1,514.3
Garner	237	1,002.0
Hamilton Golf and Country Club	592	1,100.6
Leeming	329	801.0
Lime Kiln	232	1,310.9
Marritt	2	1,206.8
Old Mill	112	1,579.5
Shaver	35	1,422.2
Spring Valley	269	1,061.0
St. John’s	386	1,066.3
Sulphur Springs	1	n/a

There is significant variation in the lot size from planning unit to planning unit. Planning units with the biggest average lot size include Old Mill, Clearview, Shaver, and Lime Kiln. Leeming, Garner, Spring Valley, and St. John’s have the smallest average lot size.

Lot configuration also substantially varies, both between planning units, and between lots within a particular planning unit. For example, the lot fabric within Leeming planning unit is relatively consistent, with 118 lots measuring approximately 22 m frontage by 30 m depth. In contrast, the lot fabric in the Lime Kiln planning unit is varied and includes narrow and deep lots, pie-shaped lots, square lots, and other oddly shaped corner and curved lots. Lot configuration will be addressed in more depth in another section. Reformation of the regulatory framework must be responsive to the varied nature of both lot fabric and built form of existing dwellings throughout the “ER” Zone.

Lot Size

The “ER” Zone regulations prescribe the minimum required lot frontage (18 m) and lot area (695 m²). In many cases, frontages and areas are larger than the minimum required by the regulations. Table 2 identifies general characteristics of lot fabric in the “ER” Zone. Lot frontage, depth, and area information were sourced from Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) assessment data, which does not calculate lot dimensions in accordance with the prescribed methods set out in the Town of Ancaster Zoning By-law 87-57.

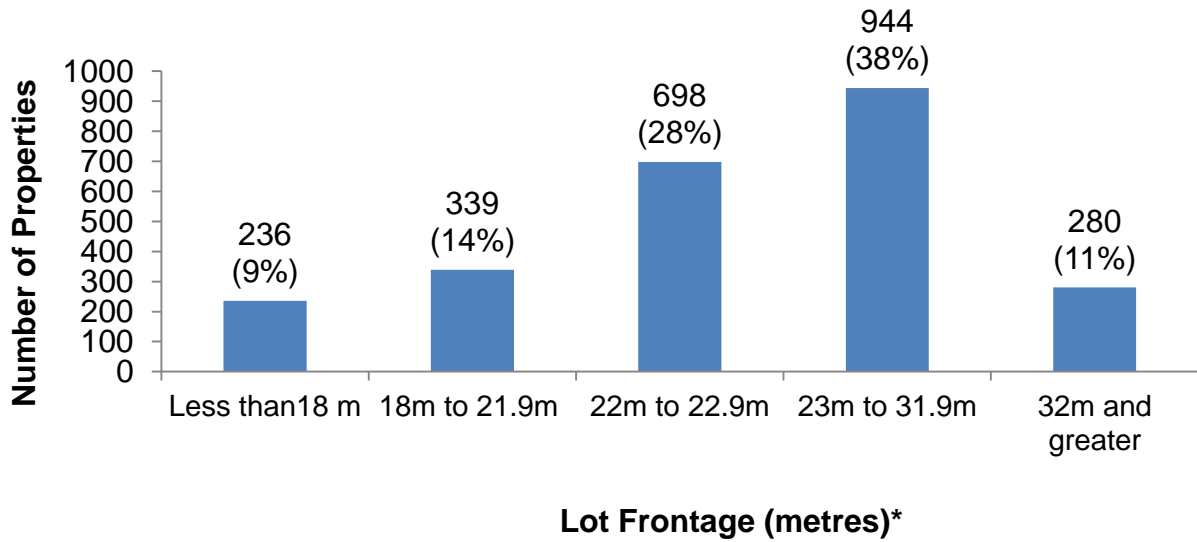
Table 2 – Lot Frontage, Depth, and Area Characteristics in the “ER” Zone

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Median
Lot Frontage (m)*	7.3	123.4	25.4	22.9
Lot Depth (m)	5.8	139.5	45.3	41.2
Lot Area (m²)	105.8	10,089.4	1,139.1	1,029.72

*Note: Exclude frontages below 7 meters (4 Properties)

Average lot frontage in the “ER” Zone is 25 m. The majority of lots (66 percent) have frontages in the range of 22 m to 32 m (see Figure 1). Approximately 28 percent of lots have a frontage of 22 m.

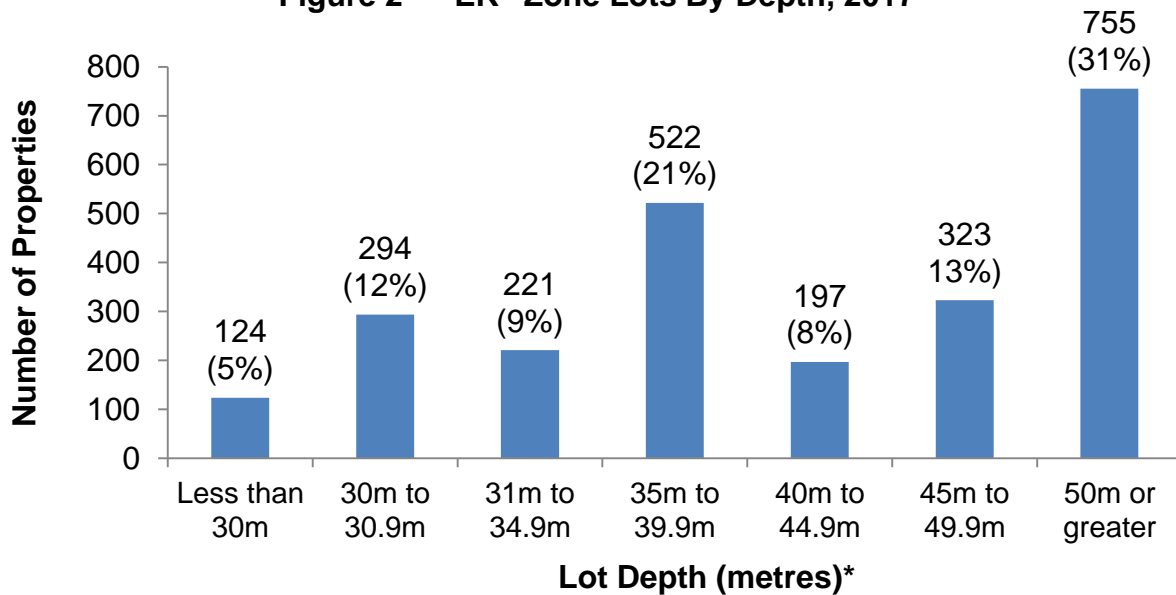
Figure 1 – “ER” Zone Lots By Frontage, 2017



*Note – Data ranges were selected based on the large occurrence of lot frontages of 22 metres. The proposed side yard setback regulation is also tied to the frequency of frontages at 22 metres.

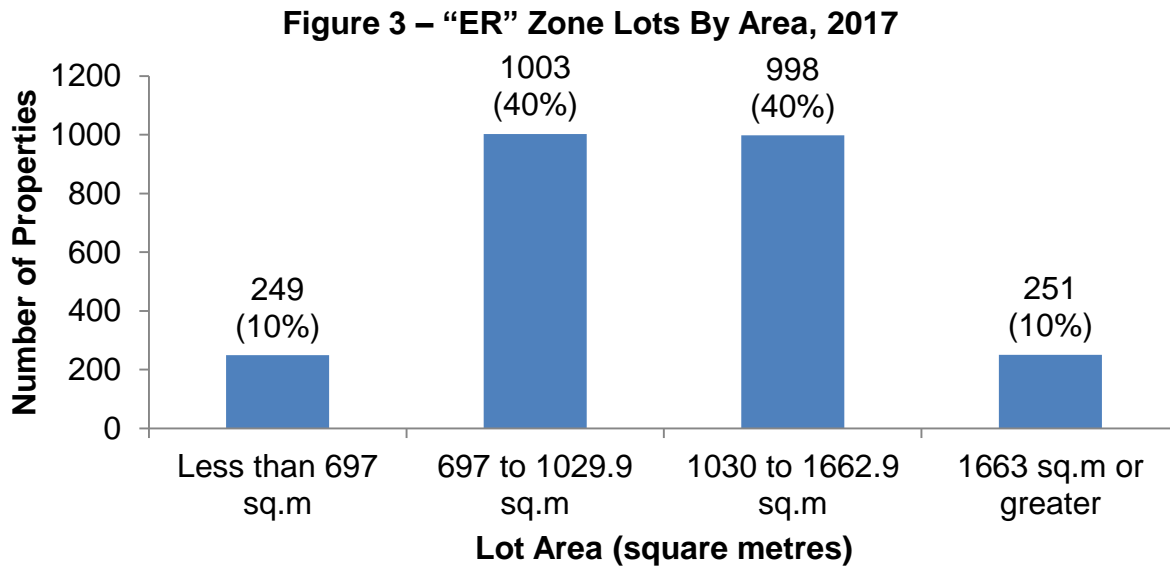
Average lot depth is 45 m. Thirty-one percent of lots have a depth of over 50 m (see Figure 2). A significant number of lots are within the lot depth category of 35 m to 39.9m.

Figure 2 – “ER” Zone Lots By Depth, 2017



*Note – Data ranges were selected based on the proposed rear yard setback regulation, which requires a progressively larger rear yards setback tied to depth a of lot.

Average lot area is 1139 m². There is a relatively even distribution of lots between the ranges of 697 m² to 1030 m² and 1030 m² to 1663 m², with eighty (80) percent of lots falling in this two ranges (see Figure 3).



The median lot frontage is approximately 2.5 m less than the average lot frontage, and the median lot depth is approximately 4 m less than average lot depth (see Table 2). The median represents the middle number in a series. The difference between the average and median indicates there may be some lots with very large frontages and depths that are causing a bias in the averages. Acknowledging this limitation, the average lot dimensions were used as a guide in understanding the lot fabric and possible modifications to the regulations respecting the building envelope.

Lot Configuration

It is important to consider lot configuration when addressing regulations that set the parameters for building envelope because some regulations may not be appropriate on every type of lot. For example, on lots with very shallow depths, large rear yard setbacks are not possible. On lots that are narrow but deep, the orientation of the dwelling will likely need to be narrow and long. In developing the proposed zoning regulations to address development in the “ER” Zone, staff took into consideration the following types of lot configurations:

- An average lot configuration based on the average frontage and depth of all lots in the “ER” Zone;
- Lots that are wide and deep;
- Lots that are wide and shallow;
- Lots that are narrow and deep; and,
- Lots that are narrow and shallow.

Although there are more possible lot configurations, these lot configurations represent the average and any substantial deviation from the average lot configuration.

Consideration was also given to corner lot configurations. Table 3 identifies the frequency of the lot configurations listed above. An average lot configuration was considered to be a lot with an average frontage and average depth, plus or minus 2 metres.

Table 3 – Frequency of Lot Type

Type of Lot (Configuration)	Frontage	Depth	Number of Lots
Average Lot (±2 m from average dimensions)	23 m up to 28 m	43 m up to 48 m	98
Wide, Deep Lot (≥2m wider and ≥2m deeper than average lot)	Equal to or greater than 28 m	Equal to or greater than 48 m	187
Wide, Shallow Lot (≥2m wider and <2m shallower than average lot)	Equal to or greater than 28 m	Less than 43 m	339
Narrow, Deep Lot (<2m narrower and ≥2m deeper than average lot)	Less than 23 m	Equal to or greater than 48 m	471
Narrow, Shallow Lot (<2m narrower and <2m shallower than average lot)	Less than 23 m	Less than 43 m	620
		Other Irregular Lots	786
		Total	2,501

A typical lot is rectangular in shape with a frontage that is shorter than its depth, with an average lot frontage of 25.3 m and an average lot depth of 45.3 m. There are a substantial number of lots that are narrow and shallow, as well as narrow and deep. Wide lots are less common.

Part 2: Development Activity in the “ER” Zone (2012 - 2017)

A review of redevelopment activity in the “ER” Zone was undertaken to explore the change in built form of dwellings between January 2012 and October 2017. Building size and lot coverage data was sourced from Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) assessment data. The City’s internal application tracking database (AMANDA) was used to determine dates of demolitions and replacement dwellings, as well as additions to existing dwellings.

Demolition and Replacement of Homes

There are approximately 2,500 single detached dwellings in the “ER” Zone. In total, 126 dwellings were demolished and replaced since 2012, representing approximately 5 percent of the building stock. On average, about 21 homes per year were demolished and replaced from 2012 to 2017, indicating an average replacement rate of less than one percent (about 0.8%) per year. Table 4 identifies number of replacement dwellings, increase in size between demolished and replacement dwellings, and change in lot coverage.

Table 4 – Characteristics of Demolished and Replaced Dwellings (January 2012-October 2017)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of Replacement Dwellings	26	20	9	23	26	22
Average Size of Demolished dwelling (total building space)	140 m ² (1,511 sq. ft.)	130 m ² (1,404 sq. ft.)	137 m ² (1,472 sq. ft.)	160 m ² (1,722 sq. ft.)	157 m ² (1,687 sq. ft.)	155 m ² (1,664 sq. ft.)
Average Size of Replacement dwelling (total building space)	348 m ² (3,745 sq. ft.)	359 m ² (3,866 sq. ft.)	381 m ² (4,096 sq. ft.)	390 m ² (4,194 sq. ft.)	411 m ² (4,426 sq. ft.)	396 m ² (4,265 sq. ft.)
% increase in size	148%	175%	178%	144%	162%	156%
Average Lot Coverage of demolished dwelling	11.58%	12.73%	13.24%	11.51%	13.47%	13.44%
Average Lot Coverage of replacement dwelling	20.08%	23.15%	24.85%	19.21%	23.80%	23.28%
% change in coverage (replacement dwelling / demolished dwelling)	73%	82%	88%	67%	77%	73%

There does not appear to be any discernable trend in replacement dwelling size and lot coverage over the course of 2012 to 2017. However, it is clear there is an overall trend of replacement dwellings being substantially larger than the dwellings they replace.

Demolished dwellings have been in the range of 1,400 to 1,700 sq. ft., while replacement dwellings are in the range of 3,700 to 4,400 sq. ft. It is apparent that the sizes of replacement dwellings are substantially larger than the ones they replace. Typically, replacement homes are at least double the size of the demolished dwelling.

Lot coverage has also increased. Lot coverage of demolished dwellings was in the range of 11.5 percent to 13.5 percent. For replacement dwellings, lot coverage falls in

the range of 19 percent to 25 percent. Note that lot coverage is calculated by adding the footprint of the dwelling and all accessory structures.

Additions to Existing Homes

Since 2012, thirty-one (31) permits for additions to existing single detached dwellings were completed in the “ER” Zone. Addition size is outlined in (Table 5).

Table 5 – Building Footprint Area and Total Added Building Space through Additions to Single Family Dwellings (January 2012 to October 2017)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Average size of footprint of addition	16 m ² (176 sq.ft.)	34 m ² (370 sq.ft.)	42 m ² (451 sq.ft.)	46 m ² (495 sq.ft.)	29 m ² (315 sq.ft.)	18 m ² (196 sq.ft.)
Average amount of total building space added	142 m ² (1524 sq.ft.)	52 m ² (564 sq.ft.)	75 m ² (809 sq.ft.)	70 m ² (754 sq.ft.)	52 m ² (564 sq.ft.)	58 m ² (629 sq.ft.)
Number of Properties	1	8	11	8	2	1

Redevelopments through additions have been infrequent in the past 6 years, with an average of 5.2 additions occurring annually. The average footprint of additions has not shown any trend during this time period. Total area added to the building has also varied from year to year.

Part 3: Analysis of Minor Variances Activity in “ER” Zone (2012 - 2017)

Staff reviewed all Committee of Adjustment decisions relating to the Ancaster “ER” Zone between 2012 and 2017. In total, there were 57 residential properties in the “ER” Zone that required applications for one or more minor variances. Fifty-five (55) of these applications/properties were granted permission for minor variances and two (2) were denied. A total of 145 variances were granted for the 55 properties. Approximately half of the properties (23) required only one minor variance.

Of the fifty-five properties with one or more minor variances, the breakdown is:

- Twelve (12) of the properties had minor variance(s) for new dwelling construction (possibly in conjunction with variances for attached garages, porches, decks, accessory structures, and lot dimensions);
- Thirty (30) properties had minor variance(s) for an addition including attached garages (possibly in conjunction with variances for porches, decks, accessory structures, and lot dimensions); and,

- Thirteen (13) properties had minor variance(s) relating strictly to accessory structures, or variances that recognized existing site/dwelling conditions.

To the greatest extent possible, only properties with minor variances relating to the dwelling are considered in this analysis. Other types of variances (e.g. for accessory structures, decks, and porches) are technical and do not relate to the dwelling. However, it is important to note that the lot coverage, as prescribed in the zoning by-law, is calculated by adding the building footprint of all structures (dwelling and accessory) on a lot.

New Dwellings

Of the twelve properties where new dwelling construction was occurring, a total of 21 variances were granted that relate strictly to the dwelling or lot dimensions. Table 6 identifies the nature of these variances and the variance with the greatest deviation from the regulation. On average, each new dwelling with a successful minor variance application obtained 1.75 variances relating to the dwelling and lot dimensions.

Table 6 – Nature of Minor Variances Granted for New Dwellings (January 2012 – October 2017)

Regulation	Number of New Dwellings with Variance to this Regulation	Variance with greatest deviation from regulation
Minimum Lot Area (695 m ²)	1	Minimum lot area of 623 m ²
Minimum Frontage (18 m)	3	Minimum frontage of 16.4 m
Maximum Height (10.5 m)	1	Maximum of 11.9 m
Minimum Front Yard (7.5 m)	3	Minimum front yard of 5.6 m
Minimum Side Yard (1.5 m)	4	Minimum side yard of 1.2m*
Minimum Flankage Yard (6.0 m)	2	Minimum flankage of 3m
Minimum Rear Yard (7.5 m)	2	Minimum rear yard of 5.8m
Maximum Lot Coverage (35%)	5 (Note - two different lot coverage variances were obtained for the same property).	Maximum lot coverage of 42%

*Note – While the parent ER zone requires a minimum side yard of 1.5m, some parcels have a special exception which requires a minimum side yard of 3m. The other three variances granted were for parcels with the special exception requiring the 3m side yard.

Analysis of Minor Variances for New Dwellings

Of the 126 new dwelling constructions since January 2012, twelve had minor variances relating to the new dwelling or lot dimensions. Per year, an average of 2.4 new dwellings have obtained minor variances.

Variances that set the parameters for building envelope are maximum height, minimum setbacks, and lot coverage. These variances are considered to be most important in terms of their impact on the potential building envelope and massing of the dwelling. Variances for lot dimensions are considered technical in nature.

The average new setbacks for front, side, and rear yard do not deviate from the parent regulation by more than 1.5 meters (20% of the maximum setback). As such, the setback variances granted are considered to be minor. While height is perceived to be a major issue in terms of its impact on privacy and massing, it is important to note that there is only one minor variance granted for maximum height between 2012 and 2017. In reviewing the built form and surrounding context of the dwelling that obtained the minor variance for height, it does not appear to be out of character with the surrounding dwellings.

In terms of variances for lot coverage, it does not appear that the new dwellings are substantially out of character with the existing neighbouring dwellings, although 2 of the 5 parcels with a lot coverage variance have not been built. All of the parcels with minor variances for lot coverage are smaller than average or irregularly shaped.

Additions

Thirty (30) properties undergoing an addition had a minor variance granted, equating to five (5) variances per year over the period of January 2012 to October 2017. Porch and deck related variances were, to the greatest extent possible, not included in the analysis, even though they would typically be considered an addition to the dwelling. Table 7 outlines the number of variances granted and the most substantial variance granted for each regulation.

Table 7 - Nature of Minor Variances Granted for Additions (January 2012 – October 2017)

Regulation	Number of Additions with Variance to this Regulation*	Variance with greatest deviation from regulation
Minimum Lot Area (695 m ²)	1	Minimum lot area of 580.6 m ²
Minimum Frontage (18 m)	1	Minimum frontage of 15.2 m
Maximum Height (10.5 m)	0	-
Minimum Front Yard (7.5 m)	13	Minimum front yard of 3.8 m
Minimum Side Yard (1.5 m)	7	Minimum side yard of 0.9 m

Regulation	Number of Additions with Variance to this Regulation*	Variance with greatest deviation from regulation
Minimum Flankage Yard (6.0 m)	6	Minimum flankage of 1.5 m
Minimum Rear Yard (7.5 m)	9	Minimum rear yard of 1.8 m
Maximum Lot Coverage (35%)	2	Maximum lot coverage of 37.4%

*Note – Projections not counted. Garage only counted if attached to dwelling. Variance only counted if it was not possible to determine if it was tied to porch or dwelling addition – if it was discernable that variance was only related to porch, it was not counted.

Analysis of Minor Variances for Additions

The total number of variances granted for the 30 properties with variances relating to additions is 64 (includes variances for porch projections and decks). If variances for porches, projections, and decks are removed from the calculation, the number of variances is 42, addressing 25 properties. Relative to the number of additions completed since January 2012 (31), it appears that the vast majority have obtained one or more variance(s).

The most frequent type of variance granted was front yard setback followed by rear yard setback, side yard setback, and flankage yard setback. Some of these variances are a significant deviation from the parent regulation (for example, a front yard setback of 3.8 m is nearly half of the setback required by the parent zone regulation. There were no variances for height and only two (2) variances for lot coverage.

When analyzing variances for additions, it is important to acknowledge that there are likely many cases where the variance is required to address existing site conditions. In general, there are cases where variances are required to address situations where an addition is being built on a dwelling that existing prior to the implementation of the “ER” Zone regulations as they are today. Dwelling location and orientation can also trigger the need for variances, as dwellings are often angled. Overall, while there are some examples of significant deviation from the required minimums/maximums of the zoning by-law, the vast majority of these variances are minor in nature.