
Additional Residential Units - Woodstock

Proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments for Discussion

August 6, 2021

The City of Woodstock has initiated amendments to the Official Plan and the City's Zoning By-law with a view to updating policies and zoning provisions regarding Additional Residential Units (ARUs). The draft policies and zone provisions attached to this briefing note are intended to provide a starting point for discussion and consultation with the public, stakeholders and various agencies (e.g. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing) regarding ARUs in Woodstock. The noted provisions have been drafted with a view to the background work that has been undertaken both the City staff and the County Community Planning office to date. It is anticipated that there will be further amendments and/or measures that will be considered resulting from the broad consultation exercise proposed regarding this issue.

Background

Bill 108, *More Homes, More Choices Act*, and accompanying regulations came into effect in Ontario in September 2019, implementing measures and Provincial direction to increase the affordability of housing to more Ontarians via, among other measures, amendments to the Planning Act and the Development Charges Act. Amendments to the Planning Act require municipalities to enact policies and zoning provisions that authorize ARUs in low density housing types, such as single-detached and semi-detached dwellings.

What is an Additional Residential Unit (ARU)?

An ARU is a type of dwelling unit that is provided as a secondary or accessory dwelling unit on a property where there is a primary dwelling unit. ARUs can be inside an existing house, added on, or located in a detached accessory structure. These come in many shapes and sizes and are commonly referred to as basement apartments, coach homes, in-law suites, garage lofts, etc. ARUs are typically smaller than the primary unit and must be smaller in order to be exempt from development charges.

Official Plan

As a starting point for consultation, staff have drafted relatively high level, enabling type Official Plan policies that will reflect and implement the current Provincial direction on ARUs, while also establishing a comprehensive suite of review criteria to inform and support the City's development of appropriate zoning provisions and, where deemed appropriate, other local implementation measures. The general intent being that the detailed local direction with respect to the circumstances under which such units

will be permitted, and what development standards will apply will be provided through the development of appropriate Zoning By-law provisions for such units, undertaken as part of a comprehensive, City initiated zoning amendment.

The proposed amendments to the Official Plan would predominantly affect the Low Density Residential policies for the City of Woodstock in Section 7.2.4. and consist largely of clarifications to the existing policy direction of the Official Plan with respect to residential intensification and low density housing forms (e.g. backyard infilling and converted dwellings) together with inclusion of specific policy direction for additional residential units (i.e. would replace the current policies for two unit converted dwellings). The key aspects of the proposed policy approach are summarized as follows:

- Establishing a definition for '*additional residential units*';
- Requiring that the City establish appropriate zoning provisions to allow for ARUs in single detached, semi-detached and townhouse dwellings (as per Provincial legislation), where they are satisfied various development review criteria can be met, such as:
 - maximum of two additional residential units per lot (i.e. one in the principle dwelling and/or one in an ancillary structure);
 - principle dwelling must have direct, individual vehicular access to a public street;
 - any increased demand for on-street parking on nearby streets can be adequately addressed;
 - the ARU(s) must be clearly secondary and subordinate to the principal dwelling on the lot and limited in size (e.g. maximum percentage of the principal dwelling and maximum gross floor area caps);
 - dwellings and lots are large enough to accommodate the ARU and provide for adequate parking, landscaping and outdoor amenity areas;
 - any new buildings, additions and/or exterior alterations/features (e.g. parking areas, doors, windows, stairways, decks) will maintain the general architectural character of the principal dwelling and surrounding neighbourhood;
 - there is unobstructed pedestrian access from the street or parking area to the unit;
 - not permitted where a lot or dwelling already contains other accessory units/uses (e.g. boarding/lodging house, garden suite, converted dwelling unit, bed and breakfast etc.);
 - existing infrastructure and public services serving the area are adequate to accommodate the establishment of ARUs;
 - potential impacts on environmental and/or heritage resources and any environmental constraints (e.g. natural and man-made hazards, noise, vibration emissions etc.) can be satisfactorily addressed;
 - additional review criteria for ARUs in ancillary structures to ensure that the siting, design (e.g. height, window and door location etc.) and orientation of the ancillary structure/unit, parking and outdoor amenity areas and any required landscaping, screening, fencing and/or other measures will limit potential privacy, visual and other impacts on abutting residential properties and be compatible with the character of the principle dwelling and the surrounding residential neighbourhood; etc.
- The zoning provisions for ARUs shall be implemented through a comprehensive City initiated amendment to the Zoning by-law or the zoning for new plans of subdivision. Site specific amendments to the Zoning by-law to permit the establishment of ARUs will not generally be permitted.
- An ARU cannot be severed from the lot containing the principle dwelling;
- Site plan control may be applied to ARUs in ancillary structures; and
- The City may consider the use of other supplementary tools and measures to assist in ensuring ARUs are appropriately regulated, including registration and/or licensing, on-street parking regulations, design guidelines, new/updated property standards by-laws etc.

Zoning

With respect to zoning, City Council has directed staff to initiate public consultation regarding ARUs utilizing a phased approach that would initially permit ARUs in areas of the City that have historically been characterized by, and/or allow for, multi-unit (e.g. two or more units) residential development and largely excluding ARUs from those areas of the City that are more exclusively developed for single-detached dwellings. The City's intent in this regard would be to further consider/review additional areas for ARU development at a later date, once the City has had an opportunity to monitor ARU implementation in the initial phase.

Generally, the highest concentration of multi-unit residential development within the City has occurred in those areas zoned Residential Zone 2 (R2) or Residential Zones 3 (R3) and 4 (R4) and includes areas around the central area of the City zoned Entrepreneurial District Zone (C3). These areas have historically experienced and/or allowed for a wider variety of housing forms (two and three unit dwellings, apartments, townhouses) than are found in the largely residential neighbourhoods beyond the central area. A map illustrating the areas of the City currently zoned R2 (which permits 2 unit dwellings, subject to relevant zoning provisions) and C3 (which permits a range of low and medium density housing types) is attached to this note for information.

It is the City's intent that an ARU would be clearly defined as being accessory to the principal residential use on a property. Further, in-keeping with Council's direction to initially limit areas where ARUs would be permitted, such uses would only be permitted in areas zoned 'Residential Zone 2 (R2), or areas of the City where multi-unit development has occurred historically, such as the C3 Zone (which permits two-unit dwellings in accordance with the provisions of the R2 Zone). As a starting point, City Council has directed that ARUs not be permitted as-of-right in areas of the City that are presently zoned R1. The actual zones in which ARUs will be permitted and under what circumstances will be determined more specifically after public and stakeholder consultation and further consideration by City Council.

Generally, ARUs would be permitted in areas zoned R2 and other areas subject to the provisions of the R2 Zone, provided that they meet the provisions for lot area, frontage, coverage, etc. as set out below, as well as the provisions that are being developed specifically for ARUs (see attached General Provisions). Consideration may also be given to permitting ARUs in single and semi-detached dwellings in new plans of subdivision created after the establishment of ARU policies and zoning provisions.

TABLE 7.2 – ZONE PROVISIONS			
Zone Provision	Single-Detached Dwelling House	Semi-Detached Dwelling (each side)	Duplex Dwelling House
Lot Area Minimum	290 m ²		540 m ²
<i>Corner Lot</i> Minimum			540 m ²
Lot Coverage Maximum for <i>Dwelling House</i>	41% of the <i>lot area</i>		
Maximum for all <i>Main Buildings</i> and <i>Accessory Buildings</i>	47% of the <i>lot area</i>		

Lot Frontage			
Minimum	9.0 m	18.0 m	
Corner Lot Minimum	12.0 m	18.0 m	
Lot Depth			
Minimum	28.0 m		
Front Yard Depth			
Minimum	6.0 m		
Rear Yard Depth			
Minimum	7.5 m		
Interior Side Yard Width			
Minimum	3.0 m on one side and 1.2 m on the other ¹	nil for the side that is attached to the other <i>dwelling house</i> and 3.0 m for the side that is not attached to the other <i>dwelling house</i> ²	3.0 m on one side and 1.2 m on the other ³
Exterior Side Yard Width			
Minimum	4.5 m		
Setback			
Minimum distance from centreline of an <i>arterial road</i> as designated on Schedule "B"		18.5 m adjacent to a <i>front yard</i> ; and 17.0 m adjacent to an <i>exterior side yard</i>	
Landscaped Open Space			
Minimum	30% of the <i>lot area</i>		
Height			
Maximum	11.0 m		
Number of Dwelling Houses per Lot			
Maximum	1	2	1
Number of Dwelling Units per Lot			
Maximum	1	2	2
Dwelling Unit Area			
Minimum	no provision	no provision	45 m ² per unit

Parking, Accessory Buildings, Etc.	In accordance with the provisions of Section 5 herein
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The draft provisions specifically for ARUs (attached to this application) would provide additional criteria, including the number of ARUs that may be permitted on a lot, the maximum size of the unit and parking requirements. The draft zoning also includes provisions for entrances to ARUs, provisions for establishing ARUs in detached accessory buildings and identifies those situations where an ARU would not be permitted. These provisions would be contained in the 'General Provisions' section of the Zoning By-law.

The draft policies and zoning provisions contained in the proposed amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law are intended to provide a starting point for discussion on the implementation of ARUs in Woodstock and reflects Council direction in this regard.