



Committee Report

To: Warden Janice Jackson
Members of the Planning and Development Committee

From: Mark Paoli
Director of Planning and Development

Date: April 15, 2021

Re: Initiation of Additional Residential Units Official Plan Amendment

Staff Recommendation:

That staff be authorized to initiate an Amendment to the County Official Plan to update the policies on Additional Residential Units and schedule a Public Meeting at the appropriate time.

Background:

Committee has expressed interest in identifying opportunities to advance planning tools in the near-term to support increased supply and mix of homes and support affordability while not detracting from the work to advance the larger Plan the Bruce project.

Staff identified an opportunity to advance policy changes related to Additional Residential Units. Research on this topic was completed by students from the University of Guelph School of Rural Planning and Development.

The current County Official Plan has policies for Secondary Suites which can be revised and updated to expand the opportunities for additional residential units. Recommended policy changes are summarized as follows:

- i) Redefine Secondary Suites as 'Additional Residential Units' to align with the Planning Act.
- ii) Broaden permission for additional residential units and garden suites to any designation where residential uses are permitted as a primary use.
- iii) In the Agricultural designation, permit one Additional Residential Unit, either in the primary dwelling or an ancillary building; this would replace the current policy that only allows a 'secondary farm residence'.
- iv) In the Rural Recreation Area designation, permit an additional residential unit only within a building containing a primary residential dwelling; this is also consistent with Niagara Escarpment Plan policies.
- v) The combined total of a primary residential unit, additional residential unit(s) and a garden suite shall not exceed three units on a lot.
- vi) Address servicing considerations, particularly for privately serviced lots, and maintain the general policy that an additional residential unit is not permitted on a lot that is legally non-conforming with respect to lot width or lot area.

A full review of issues and considerations is being finalized in partnership with students from the University of Guelph and will be posted as part of the engagement and analysis for the proposed amendment.

Analysis:

Amendments to establish a more flexible policy framework would reduce barriers to creating additional units, supporting investment and assessment growth without extension of infrastructure, and broader economic benefits associated with increased housing supply.

The proposed changes may reduce the number of Official Plan Amendments needed to permit additional residential units. In cases where amendments may still be required, a clearer policy framework could assist applicants and staff in the review of development proposals, with associated time savings.

Advancing an amendment at this time offers an opportunity to test new policies for the larger Bruce County Official Plan project and provides local Municipalities with opportunity to initiate changes to their Official Plans and implementation provisions in Zoning By-laws.

The Plan would continue to rely upon local zoning for detailed provisions related to additional residential units and this also provides for local flexibility.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

A general amendment to the County Official Plan includes costs of up to \$5000 for public notices in newspapers throughout the County to notify the public of the proposal.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

The Human Services Department is engaged in the review and discussion of secondary units as a means of increasing overall housing supply.

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

Goal 7 - Stimulate and reward innovation and economic development,
Element 'A' - Streamline and simplify our Planning Processes

Report Author:

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Departmental Approval:

Mark Paoli
Director of Planning and Development

Approved for Submission:

Sandra Datars Bere

Chief Administrative Officer