



Staff Report

To: Development Services Committee
From: George Vadeboncoeur, Manager, Planning Special Projects
Meeting Date: September 2, 2026
Report No.: DS2026-095
Subject: Zoning By-law Review – Additional Residential Unit Provisions
Type: Requires Action
Motion No.:

Recommendation

It is recommended:

1. That Report No. DS2026-095 be received and adopted.
2. That Development Services Committee direct staff to prepare a Zoning By-law Amendment to implement the proposed changes to the Accessory Residential Unit provisions outlined in this report, and that a public meeting be held to receive input on the proposed changes.

Background

On April 1, 2026 staff updated Committee on the Zoning By-law Review with [Report DS2026-42](#). At that meeting Committee reviewed a recommended list of provisions in the Zoning By-law to be updated and approved the list as presented. The first item on the list was: Accessory Residential Units (ARUs) in designated Settlement, Shoreline, Rural, and Agricultural areas. Shortly after Committee approval staff commenced the background work required to update the ARU provisions in the Zoning By-law.

Policy Context

Provincial Policies

In December 2022, the Province enacted Bill 23 - More Homes Built Faster Act, which introduced requirements for municipalities to include permissions for ARUs in Official

Plans and Zoning By-laws. The change in Provincial Policy now permits up to three (3) dwelling units per lot on parcels of urban residential land (i.e. properties within a settlement area connected to municipal water and sewer) where a single detached, semi-detached, or townhouse is permitted. In Oro-Medonte the Craighurst Crossing development and several lots in the Cathedral Pines subdivision are on full municipal services.

The Provincial ARU policies are intended to increase housing, expand the range of available housing options, and promote affordability throughout the province.

The three units could take the form of two accessory dwelling units within the principal dwelling unit for a total of three units, or one accessory dwelling unit within the principal dwelling, plus one dwelling in a detached accessory building.

In October 2024, the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 came into effect. It requires municipalities to provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options that meet the social, health, economic and well-being requirements of current and future residents.

In rural areas, the policies require rural settlements to be the focus of growth and development. Residential development is permitted on rural lands where appropriate water and sewage services can be provided.

Under the policies where a dwelling unit is permitted in a prime agricultural area, up to two additional residential units shall be permitted provided that one of the additional residential units is located within or attached to the principal dwelling and any additional units are of a limited scale and are located within, attached or in close proximity to the principal dwelling or farm building cluster.

County Official Plan

The County of Simcoe Official Plan contains policies pertaining to Healthy Communities, Housing Development and Affordable Housing. It encourages municipalities to:

- provide for an appropriate range of housing types and densities required to meet projected needs of current and future residents.
- make available: sufficient quantity of housing, taking into account demand to improve choice; and, housing development in suitable locations, which offers a good range of public service facilities and proximity to jobs, key services, and infrastructure, recognizing the needs and abilities of all residents.
- develop policies in their official plans to provide supportive communities for residents to age in place with integration of affordable and age-friendly housing, community facilities and support services that are suitable to meet the needs of all people.
- permit, wherever possible, individual lot intensification such as secondary or accessory suites in residential buildings subject to meeting building, health, and safety regulations.

- revise their zoning bylaws to ensure that minimum zoning provisions do not hamper the appropriate provision of affordable housing at any residential locations.
- use alternate development standards to facilitate development of affordable housing provided health, safety, servicing and other reasonable standards or criteria can be met.

Township of Oro-Medonte Official Plan

The Township of Oro-Medonte Official Plan (OP) contains numerous policies pertaining to the provision of housing. One of the main goals of the OP is to, *“Direct growth and settlement to appropriate locations.”* The OP goes on to state: *“The Township is committed to providing a range of housing options for all residents which include attached or detached single dwelling units, garden suites, additional residential units, and multiple residential units. Settlement Areas and Rural Settlements are recognized in this plan as those areas where growth and development shall be focused. Other lower density and locally appropriate housing can be accommodated within other designations as outlined in this plan.”*

Under the OP, growth is to be directed primarily to settlement areas, but there are provisions that permit development in other land use designations. *“Small scale intensification through the conversion of an existing dwelling, including accessory dwelling units in accordance with the policies of this Plan, or through the construction of a new building containing one or two dwelling units;”*

Section 4.9 of the OP outlines policies dealing with ARUs:

4.9 Additional Residential Units

1. *Additional Residential Units* are defined as separate and complete *dwelling units* that are contained either within the structure of a residential *dwelling* or in an *accessory building or structure* on the same lot. *Additional Residential Units* allow for *affordable* housing opportunities and the policies of Section 2 of this Plan determine in which land use designations an accessory residential *dwelling unit* shall be permitted.
2. *Additional Residential Units* provide for the opportunity to develop *affordable* housing units within the Township. Development of these units will assist in supporting the County's target of providing 10 percent *affordable* housing units to be created each year throughout the County.
3. Where an *Additional Residential Unit* is permitted, a maximum of two *Additional Residential Units* are permitted within a single detached, semi-detached *dwelling* or rowhouse dwelling.
4. Where an *Additional Residential Unit* is permitted, a maximum of one *Additional Residential Unit* is permitted within an *accessory building or structure* of a single detached, semi-detached dwelling or rowhouse dwelling.

5. For further clarity, the intent of this policy is to permit up to a total of three residential units, which includes the primary dwelling, on eligible properties and in accordance with the relevant zoning provisions.
6. *Additional Residential Units* are not permitted within *hazardous lands* as defined and regulated by the local Conservation Authority or applicable authority either within the basement of a primary residence or within an *accessory building or structure*.
7. *Additional Residential Units* will be regulated by the provisions of the implementing Zoning By-law in accordance with the following provisions:
 - a) The *Additional Residential Unit* shall clearly be ancillary to the principal residence and specific limits as the maximum floor area permitted or size relative to the primary residence will be established in the Zoning By-law;
 - b) The *Additional Residential Unit* shall be integrated into its surroundings with *compatible* visual impact to the streetscape;
 - c) The *Additional Residential Unit* shall be *compatible* in design and scale with the built form of the primary dwelling;
 - d) The *Additional Residential Unit* shall only be permitted on lots that have appropriate frontage and an entrance directly onto a publicly maintained road; and,
 - e) Other siting requirements related to matters such as servicing, parking and access requirements and stormwater management shall be established in the Zoning By-law.
8. *Additional Residential Units* shall be established in accordance with the *Minimum Distance Separation Formulae*.
9. *Additional Residential Units* shall be within the *existing* housing cluster on any lands designated Agricultural or Rural.
10. The *Additional Residential Unit* will be permitted only where a property is demonstrated to have an adequate supply of potable water and an appropriate means of sewage disposal in a manner that is acceptable to the Township.
11. Generally, *Additional Residential Units* will be permitted as-of-right within fully serviced *Settlement Areas* and *Rural Settlements*.
12. The severance of an *Additional Residential Unit* located within the primary *dwelling unit* or within an *accessory building or structure* through consent, subdivision or condominium, is prohibited. Additionally, surplus farm *dwelling* severance policies shall not be used to create a separate lot for *Additional Residential Units*.

13. *Garden suites* are temporary dwellings and are not considered *Additional Residential Units* under this Plan.
14. As a condition of approval, the Township may require that the *Additional Residential Unit* be registered in accordance with the provisions of the *Municipal Act*.

Under the Shoreline Policies, “*Secondary or accessory dwelling units may be established within the Shoreline designation in accordance with Section 4.9 of this Plan and with the provisions of the Zoning By-law. Additional Residential Units may only be established where the lot is of an appropriate size to accommodate the unit and the associated individual on-site sewage services and individual on-site water services.*”

Under the Rural Policies, ARUs are permitted subject to the ARU policies outlined under Section 4.9. of the OP.

In conclusion, Provincial, County and Township land use policies encourage ARUs in areas of the Township where residential uses are permitted subject to the policies outlined in the Township Official Plan. To implement these policies and provide more specific land use controls for the establishment of ARUs, amendments to the Zoning By-law are necessary.

Township of Oro-Medonte Zoning By-law 97-95, as amended

Section 5.4 of the Zoning By-law contains provisions relating to the establishment of Apartment Dwelling Units Accessory to a Single Detached Dwelling.

The following are the key provisions:

Provision	Detail
Zones Permitted	R1, RUR1, RUR2 and A/RU Zones
Single Detached Dwelling unit size required	Must have gross floor area of 110 square metres (1,184 square feet), exclusive of apartment unit
Minimum floor area of apartment dwelling unit	50 square metres (538 square feet)
Maximum floor area of apartment dwelling unit	70 square metres (753.5 square feet)
Egress to the apartment unit	Has a means of egress to the outside that is separate from any means of egress for another dwelling unit
Window opening	A window opening in the apartment unit that has an area of 0.30 square metres (3.23 square feet) and is located above grade

Apartment dwelling units accessory to commercial uses are also permitted in the Local Commercial (LC), General Commercial (GC) zones subject to specific criteria:

- a) the *floor area* of the *apartment dwelling* units does not exceed 33% of the *gross floor area* of the *principal use* on the lot;
- b) the minimum *floor area* of the *apartment dwelling* unit is 50 square metres (538 square feet);
- c) the maximum *floor area* of the *apartment dwelling* unit is 70 square metres (753.5 square feet);
- d) the *apartment dwelling* unit has a means of egress to the outside that is separate from any means of egress for another *dwelling unit* or any commercial use; and,
- e) a window opening in the *apartment dwelling* unit having an area of 0.30 square metres (3.23 square feet) is located above *grade*.

The Zoning By-law does not permit ARUs in detached accessory buildings or structures.

Development Services Committee over the last few years has considered and approved several rezoning applications to permit ARUs in detached accessory structures. Planning staff have generally supported the rezoning applications as the proposed use is consistent with the new planning policy framework for accessory dwelling units.

With recent policy changes staff are now required to apply the concept of ARUs in detached accessory structures occurring within a “building cluster” on a property. There are no parameters established for this term in the County or Township Official Plans, so staff have been applying their professional judgement on each application.

This is one of many items that is addressed as part of the review of ARU zoning provisions below.

Review of ARU Zoning Provisions

Staff reviewed the ARU provisions from twelve (12) municipalities, nine (9) with waterfront, seven (7) in Simcoe County and five (5) located elsewhere. Planning staff collectively reviewed the various ARU provisions from the twelve municipalities and have prepared four (4) different provision groupings for consideration by Committee and one (1) recommended grouping in the blue column that would form the basis of the Zoning By-law Amendment.

In preparing the recommended provisions, staff considered ARU compatibility with the principal dwelling on the lot; the impacts of ARUs on adjacent residential properties, including visual intrusion and loss of privacy; the impact on amenity areas and the proximity of ARUs to lot lines.

Provision/Option	1	2	3	4
ARU Permitted in Zoning By-law	Maximum of two ARUs - one apartment ARU and one detached ARU, subject to meeting lot size requirements and the zone provisions	Maximum of two - one apartment ARU and one detached ARU, subject to meeting lot size requirements	Maximum of three - one apartment ARU and two detached ARUs, subject to meeting lot size requirements	Maximum of three - one apartment ARU and two detached ARUs subject, to meeting lot size requirements
Separation Distance between dwelling units (Cluster)	50 metres max from primary dwelling	60 metres max from primary dwelling	30 metres max from all buildings and structures used for agriculture	30 metres max from primary dwelling
Dwelling Unit Access	Same driveway as the principal dwelling	Same driveway as the principal dwelling	Same driveway as the principal dwelling	Same driveway as the principal dwelling
Maximum Size of an Apartment Unit in a Dwelling Unit	50% of the total floor area of dwelling unit or 110 square metres (1,184 square feet) max, whichever is greater	Lesser of 50% of primary dwelling or 150 square metres	Max 45% of GFA of primary dwelling unit	Max 50% of GFA of primary dwelling unit
Maximum Size of ARU in a Detached Accessory Building	50% of the total floor area of dwelling unit or 110 square metres (1,184 square feet) max, whichever is greater.	Lesser of 50% of primary dwelling or 150 square metres	Max 45% of GFA of the primary dwelling	Rural and AG zones 139 square metres max All other zones, 102 square metres
Maximum Height of ARU in a Detached Accessory Building	Single Storey ARU – max height 4.0 metres. (13.0 feet) Above another accessory use, maximum height 5 metres (16.5 feet)	One storey unless above another accessory use (i.e. ARU above garage space)	Max height 5.0 metres	No higher than the max permitted in Zoning By-law
Minimum Lot Size	Mun. Services Detached .050 ha (.12 acres)	45% max lot coverage	0.1 ha (0.24 acres)	0.4 ha (0.98 acres)

	Attached .050 ha (.12 acres) Private Services Detached 0.32 ha (0.76 acres) Attached 0.18 ha (0.45 acres)			
Setbacks	As per requirements of a dwelling unit in Zoning By-law	As per requirements of a dwelling unit in Zoning By-law	As per requirements of a dwelling unit in Zoning By-law	As per requirements of a dwelling unit in Zoning By-law
Parking Requirement	One space per ARU	One space per ARU	Two spaces per ARU	One space per ARU in a shared area with the primary dwelling unit
Waterfront Restrictions	Only one apartment unit in dwelling unit is permitted. Not located in floodplain. On Lake Simcoe, septic system must comply with LSPP requirements.	Not located closer to the water than the dwelling	Only 1 ARU permitted	Only located in yard adjacent the road
ARU Permitted in Basement	Yes	Yes	No	No
Mobile Home or Modular Home	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Park Model Trailer	No	No	No	No

Planning staff are of the opinion that the proposed provisions in the highlighted column are the best combination of ARU provisions/restrictions to include in the updated Zoning By-law to implement the Official Plan ARU policies.

The Zoning Categories Where ARUs are Permitted

Staff reviewed all zoning categories where single detached dwellings and townhouses are permitted to determine which zones could accommodate ARUs, the type of ARU that would be appropriate, and any other provisions that should apply based on Provincial and Township policies. Most of the zone categories pertain to residential zones on small lots with private service systems where detached accessory dwelling

units would not be appropriate. In these cases, it is being recommended that only apartment type accessory dwellings within the primary dwelling unit be permitted. More flexibility is provided in rural zones where lot sizes are larger and in zone categories for areas that have full municipal services to meet provincial policy requirements.

Wastewater treatment system verification would be required for lots on private services and new units would need to meet the minimum parking requirements in the Zoning By-law.

The following chart outlines staff's recommendation.

Recommended Zones for ARUs	Type of ARU	Number of ARUs	Other Provisions
SR and RLS and all exceptions to these zones	Apartment	1	Verification of Septic System Capacity. Be located on a public road
R1 -Single Family and Semi-detached R2 - Townhouse	Apartment	1	Verification of Septic System Capacity Required Parking to be provided (Primary – 2 spaces, Apartment 1.5 spaces)
R1*28, *59 (Snowshoe Trail)	Apartment	1	Verification of Septic System Capacity
R1*63 (Cathedral Pines, Pine Ridge, Maplecrest)	Apartment	1	Verification of Septic System Capacity
R1*71, *91, *113 (Horseshoe Valley)	Apartment	1	Verification of Septic System Capacity
R1*75 (Braestone)	Apartment	1	Verification of Septic System Capacity
R1*101,*107, *165, *175 (Shelswell, Bachly, Boyd, Moonstone Road East)	Apartment	1	Verification of Septic System Capacity
R1*119 (Oro-Station & Hawkestone)	Apartment	1	Verification of Septic System Capacity
R1*187 (Line 4 North)	Apartment	1	Verification of Septic System Capacity
R1*301 (Craighurst)	Up to two apartments within the primary dwelling unit or one apartment and one detached ARU	2	Required Parking to be provided (Primary – 2 spaces, Apartment 1 space)

R1*320 (Eagles Rest)	Apartment	1	Verification of Septic System Capacity and Required Parking to be provided (Primary – 2 spaces, Accessory Apartment 1 space)
RUR1 and RUR2 and all exceptions to these zones	Up to two apartments within the primary dwelling unit or one apartment and one detached ARU	2	Verification of Septic System Capacity Required Parking to be provided (Primary – 2 spaces, Accessory Apartment and detached ARU 1 space each)
A/RU	Up to two apartments within the primary dwelling unit or one apartment and one detached ARU	2	Verification of Septic System Capacity Required Required Parking to be provided (Primary – 2 spaces, Accessory Apartment and detached ARU 1 space each)
PR and I	Apartment	1	Verification of Septic System Capacity Required

Next Steps

If Committee agrees with the recommended ARU provisions outlined in this report, staff will prepare a draft Zoning By-law amendment containing the new provisions. A statutory public meeting under the provisions of the Planning Act would then be held to gather input from the public and Council on the proposed amendment. Staff would then bring forward an action report to Development Services Committee outlining the comments received at the public meeting and any recommended changes to the draft by-law amendment. With Committee's approval, the recommended Zoning By-law Amendment would then come forward to the next available Council meeting for consideration.

Staff are also considering the creation of urban design guidelines that may or may not be included in the Zoning By-law amendment to assist those that are interested in establishing an ARU. The guidelines would address matters such as design compatibility, types of external finishes, buffering, unit access points, establishment of amenity areas, etc.

Financial/Legal Implications/ Risk Management

This action report does not have any direct financial or other implications at this time. There are potential financial and legal implications should the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) and Council chooses to defend the decisions.

Policies/Legislation

Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13
Provincial Planning Statement, 2024
County of Simcoe Official Plan
Township of Oro-Medonte Official Plan

Corporate Strategic Priorities

In December 2023, Council adopted the Township's Corporate Strategic Plan 2024-2027. The application is consistent with the following Plan priorities:

- Community Engagement
- Employment Lands
- Well Planned Development

Consultations

Consultations were held with Development Services Staff.

Conclusion

The Zoning By-law Review was identified as a Township priority due to legislative requirements to bring it into conformity with the Township's new Official Plan and new Provincial policies. There is also a need to modernize the By-law. Ten specific areas of the by-law were identified for review. The provisions pertaining to Additional Residential Units (ARUs) were identified as the first priority.

Staff reviewed the ARU provisions from several municipalities and are recommending that a Zoning By-law Amendment be prepared that implements the proposed changes outlined in this report and that a public meeting be held under the provisions of the Planning Act to receive public comment on the proposed amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

George Vadeboncoeur,
Manager, Planning Special Projects

August 25, 2026

Approvals:

Andy Karaiskakis, Manager, Planning Services
Brent Spagnol, Director, Development Services

Date of Approval

August 26, 2026
August 28, 2026