

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: Residential Uses and Subsidiary Dwelling Units – Text Amendment

Date Prepared: June 18, 2025

Report To: Committee of the Whole

Councillor and Role: Councillor Maggie Burton, Planning

Ward: N/A

Decision/Direction Required:

To consider a text amendment to the Envision St. John's Development Regulations that will enable more residential uses across various zones and change the requirements for Subsidiary Dwelling Units within a Single Detached Dwelling.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

Last June, Council approved a housing amendment to the Envision St. John's Development Regulations that enabled a greater variety of housing types across various residential zones. That text amendment was prompted by CMHC's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). One year later, the City remains committed to removing barriers and allowing more density where appropriate.

The attached Development Regulations amendment is proposed as part of the City's efforts to increase housing supply in cooperation with CMHC under the HAF. This amendment will add Semi-Detached Dwelling as a permitted use in the Residential 1 (R1) Zone; change Dwelling Unit on the 2nd storey or higher in the Commercial Regional (CR) Zone from a discretionary use to a permitted use; change Accessory Dwelling Unit in the Industrial General (IG) Zone from a permitted use to a discretionary use and enable Lodging House and Accessory Dwelling Units as discretionary uses in the Agriculture (AG) Zone. The amendment also proposes changing the size requirement for Subsidiary Dwelling Units. Currently, up to two (2) Subsidiary Dwelling Units are permitted within a Single Detached Dwelling, and the total gross floor area of both these units combined must be less than the size of the main unit. This amendment proposes changing that requirement so that the two Subsidiary Dwelling Units together can exceed the size of the main unit, so long as each Subsidiary Dwelling Unit is smaller than the main unit. This conforms to the National Building Code of Canada.

The proposed amendment introduces new residential uses in the R1 Zone and AG Zone. Adding Semi-Detached Dwelling as a permitted use in the R1 Zone aligns with the goal of increasing density in areas where it is appropriate. In the R1 Zone, two-unit dwellings in the form of a Single Detached Dwelling with a Subsidiary Dwelling Unit has been permitted since at least the 1980s. The 2024 housing text amendment enabled Single Detached Dwelling in the R1 Zone to have up to two Subsidiary Dwelling Units and one Backyard Suite, for a total of four (4) Dwelling Units on one lot. Adding Semi-Detached Dwellings to the R1 Zone enables a

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new housing form in this zone and can contribute to a wider range of housing choice without increasing the overall density that is already allowed in the zone.

Enabling Lodging House associated with an existing farm or forestry operation and Accessory Dwelling Unit as discretionary uses in the AG Zone will allow new forms of on-site accommodation for workers on farms or forestry operations. The AG Zone falls within the St. John's Urban Region's Agricultural Development Area (ADA), and development here requires approval from the provincial Land Development Advisory Authority (LDAA). The proposed amendments have been sent to the LDAA for review and the City anticipates a response soon.

The proposed changes to make existing uses either permitted or discretionary within a zone are intended to make sure public consultation is carried out where it is most needed, recognizing that advertising and public consultation are useful and necessary for some, but not all, residential proposals. The change to the size requirements for Subsidiary Dwelling Units within a Single Detached Dwelling is intended to allow greater flexibility in unit size and enable more homeowners to develop Subsidiary Dwelling Units while keeping each unit subordinate to and smaller than the main Dwelling Unit.

The proposed amendment aligns with the policies of the Municipal Plan. Further analysis can be found in the attached amendment document.

Public Consultation

Public consultation will be carried out in accordance with Section 4.8 of the Development Regulations. Staff recommend public notification (not a public meeting), as the proposed amendment is in line with Municipal Plan policies and CMHC's Housing Accelerator Fund.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications: Not applicable.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: CMHC; residents and property owners in St. John's.
3. Is this a New Plan or Strategy: No
4. Alignment with Strategic Directions:

A Sustainable City: Plan for land use and preserve and enhance the natural and built environment where we live.

A Sustainable City: Facilitate and create the conditions that drive the economy by being business and industry friendly; and being a location of choice for residents, businesses and visitors.

5. Alignment with Adopted Plans: Envision St. John's Municipal Plan and Development Regulations.

6. Accessibility and Inclusion: Not applicable.
7. Legal or Policy Implications: A text amendment to the Development Regulations is required.
8. Privacy Implications: Not applicable.
9. Engagement and Communications Considerations: Consultation (public notification) is proposed. The amendment will also have a project page on the Engage St. John's Planning page.
10. Human Resource Implications: Not applicable.
11. Procurement Implications: Not applicable.
12. Information Technology Implications: Not applicable.
13. Other Implications: Not applicable.

Recommendation:

That Council consider an amendment to the Envision St. John's Development Regulations to enable more residential uses in several zones and change the size requirements for Subsidiary Dwelling Units within a Single Detached Dwelling.

Further, that the application be publicly advertised in accordance with the Development Regulations.

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Approved by: Ken O'Brien, MCIP, Chief Municipal Planner

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Residential Uses and Subsidiary Dwelling Units - Text Amendment .docx
Attachments:	- DRAFT DR Amend No. 57 2025 - Residential Uses and Subsidiary Dwelling Units- TEXT (ff).pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jun 18, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Ken O'Brien - Jun 18, 2025 - 2:22 PM

Jason Sinyard - Jun 18, 2025 - 4:00 PM