

Decision Note

Title:	Residential Uses and Subsidiary Dwelling Units – Adoption
Date Prepared:	August 5, 2025
Report To:	Regular Meeting of Council
Councillor and Role:	Councillor Maggie Burton, Planning
Ward:	N/A

Decision/Direction Required:

To adopt Envision St. John's Development Regulations Amendment Number 57, 2025 to 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:

This Development Regulations amendment is proposed as part of the City's efforts to remove barriers and increase housing supply in cooperation with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). This amendment allows more residential uses in different zones and encourages increased density where appropriate.

The additions include introducing Semi-Detached Dwellings in the Residential 1 (R1) Zone; changing Dwelling Unit on the 2nd storey or higher in the Commercial Regional (CR) Zone from a discretionary use to a permitted use; changing Accessory Dwelling Unit in the Industrial General (IG) Zone from permitted to discretionary; adding Lodging House and Accessory Dwelling Units as discretionary in the Agriculture (AG) Zone; and easing the size requirements for two Subsidiary Dwelling Units within a Single Detached Dwelling. The amendment also proposes two additional changes that were added following public consultation: adding Dwelling Unit – 2nd storey or higher as a permitted use in the Residential Mixed (RM) Zone and adding Dwelling Unit – 1st storey as a discretionary use in the same Zone.

Adding Semi-Detached Dwellings to the R1 Zone will enable a new housing form that is compatible with the Zone. The R1 Zone already allows a Single Detached Dwelling with a main unit plus up to two Subsidiary Dwelling Units in the house, for a total of three (3) units in a house, plus possibly a Backyard Suite for a total of four (4) units on one lot. One would need a lot area of at least 720 square metres to accommodate two (2) Semi-Detached Dwellings, whereas a Single Detached Dwelling requires only 450 square metres of land. So density should not be an issue.

To ensure public consultation is carried out where it is most needed, the proposed changes make some existing uses either discretionary or permitted within a zone. This change recognizes that public consultation is necessary for some, but not all, residential development proposals.

The addition of 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. As the AG Zone is within the St. John's Urban Region's Agricultural Development Area (ADA), the proposed amendment was sent to the Province's Land Development Advisory Authority (LDAA) for review, and they identified no concerns.

Currently, up to two 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 Unit is smaller than and subordinate to the main unit.

The RM Zone allows a mix of residential and commercial uses, so enabling dwelling units on the second storey or higher and on the first storey will allow for more mixed-use buildings while remaining consistent with the intent of the Zone.

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

Public Consultation

The proposed amendment was advertised on four occasions in *The Telegram*. A notice of the amendment was posted on the City's website and on digital screens in the City's community centres. Information about the proposed amendment was also available on the Planning Engage page.

Generally, feedback on the proposed amendment was mixed. Some people supported the proposed changes and stated the need for more housing in various forms. Others expressed concerns, specifically the addition of Semi-Detached Dwellings in the R1 Zone. Some residents feel Semi-Detached Dwellings are not appropriate for the R1 Zone and may negatively affect older R1 Zone neighbourhoods. Some believe the proposed lot size and frontage requirements for a Semi-Detached Dwelling should be reduced to enable development of Semi-Detached Dwellings on smaller lots.

During public consultation, staff identified another zone where additional residential uses can be added. The Residential Mixed (RM) Zone allows a mix of residential and some commercial uses, but does not currently allow Dwelling Units on the 2nd storey or higher or Dwelling Units on the 1st storey. As a result, these uses have been added to the RM Zone.

Next Steps

Should Council decide to adopt the amendment, the amendment will be forwarded to the NL Department of Municipal Affairs and Community Engagement for registration.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications: Not applicable.
2. Partners or Interested Parties: 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: Public notification was carried out in accordance with the Development Regulations. Notice of the amendment was advertised in The Telegram, on the City's website, on digital screens in the City's community centres and the amendment has 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. Information Management Implications: Not applicable.

14. Other Implications: Not applicable.

Recommendation:

That Council adopt the attached Envision St. John's Development Regulations Amendment Number 57, 2025 to enable more residential uses across various zones and change the requirements for Subsidiary Dwelling Units within a Single Detached Dwelling.

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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 – Adoption.docx
Attachments:	- DR Amend No. 57 2025 - Residential Uses and Subsidiary Dwelling Units- TEXT (ff).pdf
Final Approval Date:	Aug 7, 2025

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

Ken O'Brien - Aug 6, 2025 - 4:13 PM

Jason Sinyard - Aug 7, 2025 - 9:09 AM