

# City of St. John's Development Regulations, 2021

## St. John's Development Regulations Amendment Number 77, 2026 DRAFT

### Accessory Buildings and Backyard Suites in Rural Zones

April 2026



**URBAN AND RURAL PLANNING ACT, 2000**

**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT**

**CITY OF ST. JOHN'S Development Regulations, 2021**

**Amendment Number 77, 2026**

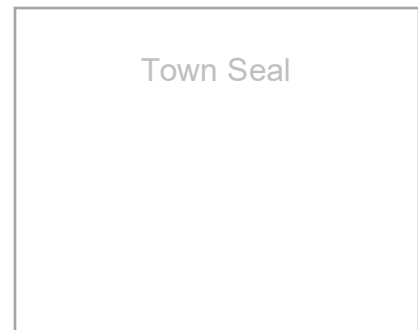
Under the authority of section 16 of the *Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000*, the City Council of St. John's adopts the City of St. John's Development Regulations Amendment Number 77, 2026.

Adopted by the City Council of St. John's on the \_\_\_\_ day of 2026.

Signed and sealed this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_.

Mayor: \_\_\_\_\_

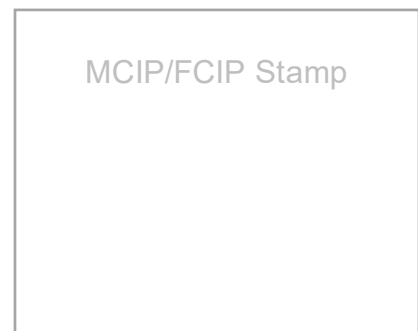
Clerk: \_\_\_\_\_



**Canadian Institute of Planners Certification**

I certify that the attached City of St. John's Development Regulations Amendment Number 77, 2026 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000*.

MCIP/FCIP: \_\_\_\_\_



<b>Development Regulations/Amendment</b>	
<b><u>REGISTERED</u></b>	
Number	_____
Date	_____
Signature	_____

# CITY OF ST. JOHN'S

## Development Regulations Amendment Number 77, 2026

### **BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS**

The City is considering an amendment to City of St. John's Development Regulations, 2021 to allow Accessory Buildings in front of the building line in Rural Zones at Council's discretion, increase the maximum permitted height for Accessory Buildings in Rural Zones, and increase the maximum permitted height for Backyard Suites in Rural Residential Zones.

### **ANALYSIS**

The proposed amendment applies primarily to lands within the Rural Land Use District, though the proposed changes to Accessory Building location and height requirements will also apply to lands within the Forestry, Agriculture, Watershed, and Open Space Land Use Districts.

The Rural Land Use District is applied to lands outside the urban core. The Rural District enables agriculture, quarrying, forestry, and natural heritage and tourism uses, as well as limited rural residential uses. Residential development in the rural areas mainly consists of single detached dwellings on large, oversized lots without municipal servicing. The Municipal Plan recognizes the importance of retaining the rural character of this area and protecting rural and resource lands.

Currently, the Development Regulations require Accessory Buildings to be located behind the building line in a rear or side yard and set the maximum height for Accessory Buildings at 5 metres, or for a Residential use, the lesser of 5 metres or the height of the main dwelling. The proposed changes to Accessory Buildings requirements in Rural Zones will allow Accessory Buildings to be in front of a main building or dwelling, at Council's discretion, and will allow taller Accessory Buildings. The proposed changes recognize that many rural properties are large, deep lots where the main building is set far back from the street line or screened by vegetation. Given the existing development pattern and lot characteristics of these areas, allowing taller Accessory Buildings or allowing an Accessory Building in front of the building line is unlikely to affect the rural character or obstruct the front of the property or surrounding sightlines.

The proposed change to increase maximum building height for a Backyard Suite applies to rural residential areas and aims to allow greater flexibility to encourage this type of development. Increasing the maximum height will allow for loft-style buildings and a greater variety of Backyard Suite designs. This aligns with Policy 4.1.2 of the Municipal Plan to enable a variety of housing to create diverse neighbourhoods that include a mix of housing forms and tenures. The existing rural residential development pattern consisting of large, oversized lots will ensure adequate separation is maintained between Backyard Suites and adjacent buildings.

The proposed amendment recognizes the traditional rural development pattern of large, oversized lots in these areas and will allow increased flexibility for the siting and height of Accessory Buildings and height of Backyard Suites while maintaining the rural character of the area. These standards are in line with Policy 8.10.3 of the Municipal Plan which states “appropriate standards shall be established to ensure the quality and preservation of the rural environment.”

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

To be completed after consultation.

## **ST. JOHN’S URBAN REGION REGIONAL PLAN**

The proposed amendment is in line with the St. John’s Urban Region Regional Plan. An amendment to the St. John’s Urban Region Regional Plan would not be required to change the location or height requirements for Accessory Buildings in Rural, Open Space, and Watershed Zones or change the height requirements for Backyard Suites in the Rural Residential (RR) or Rural Residential Infill (RRI) Zones.

## **ST. JOHN’S DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AMENDMENT NUMBER 77, 2026**

The City of St. John’s Development Regulations, 2021 is amended by:

- 1) Repealing Section 6.2.4 respecting Accessory Building Location, which states:  
**“6.2.4 Accessory Building Location**  
**Accessory Buildings shall be:**
  - (a) located in Rear and Side Yards and shall be located behind the Building Line;
  - (b) located a minimum of 1.2 metres from any Lot Line;
  - (c) located a minimum of 2.4 metres from any other Building on the Lot; and
  - (d) located a minimum of 3.0 metres from a Street, subject to Section 7.2.3 (Corner Lots and Yards Abutting a Street)”

and substituting the following:

- “6.2.4 Accessory Building Location**
- (1) **Accessory Buildings shall be:**
    - (a) located in Rear and Side Yards and shall be located behind the Building Line;
    - (b) located a minimum of 1.2 metres from any Lot Line;
    - (c) located a minimum of 2.4 metres from any other Building on the Lot; and
    - (d) located a minimum of 3.0 metres from a Street, subject to Section 7.2.3 (Corner Lots and Yards Abutting a Street)
  - (2) **Notwithstanding Subsection 6.2.4(1)(a), an Accessory Building located within the Rural Residential (RR), Rural Residential Infill (RRI), Rural (R), Agriculture (AG), Forestry (F), Mineral Working (MW), Watershed (W), Open Space (O), or Open Space Reserve (OR) Zones may be**

located in a Front Yard and in front of the Building Line, at the discretion of Council.”

- 2) Repealing Section 6.2.3 respecting Accessory Building Height, which states:

**“6.2.3 Accessory Building Height**

**(1) For a Residential Use, the Accessory Building height shall not exceed the lesser of 5 metres or the height of the main residential Building on the Lot.**

**(2) For all other Uses, the Accessory Building height shall not exceed 5 metres.”**

and substituting the following:

**“6.2.3 Accessory Building Height**

**(1) For a Residential Use, the Accessory Building height shall not exceed the lesser of 5 metres or the height of the main residential Building on the Lot.**

**(2) For all other Uses, the Accessory Building height shall not exceed 5 metres.**

**(3) Notwithstanding Subsections 6.2.3(1) and 6.2.3(2), the height of an Accessory Building located within the Rural Residential (RR), Rural Residential Infill (RRI), Rural (R), Agriculture (AG), Forestry (F), Mineral Working (MW), Watershed (W), Open Space (O), or Open Space Reserve (OR) Zones shall not exceed 5 metres or the height of the main Building on the Lot, whichever is greater.**

**(a) Where an Accessory Building exceeds 5 metres in height, no windows, doors, or balconies shall be permitted on any second-storey or higher wall located within 5 metres of a Side Lot Line or Rear Lot Line.”**

- 3) Repealing Section 6.7.3 respecting Backyard Suite Height, which states:

**“6.7.3 Backyard Suite Height**

**The Backyard Suite height shall not exceed the lesser of 5 metres or the height of the main residential Building on the Lot.”**

and substituting the following:

**“6.7.3 Backyard Suite Height**

**(1) The Backyard Suite height shall not exceed the lesser of 5 metres or the height of the main residential Building on the Lot.**

**(2) Notwithstanding Subsection 6.7.3(1), the height of a Backyard Suite located in a Rural Residential (RR) or Rural Residential Infill (RRI) Zone shall not exceed 5 metres or the height of the main residential Building on the Lot, whichever is greater.**

**(a) Where a Backyard Suite exceeds 5 metres in height, no windows, doors, or balconies shall be permitted on any second-storey or higher wall located within 5 metres of a Side Lot Line or Rear Lot Line.”**