

Northern Bruce Peninsula Official Plan Update 2017 Topic Papers

Prepared by the Bruce County Planning and Development Department

Topic 4: Housing and Dwellings

Housing is a major component of communities; residential uses can easily occupy the majority of land in a settlement area. In North Bruce Peninsula, housing is used for residential and recreational purposes; in 2011, Statistics Canada recorded 4,954 private dwellings (dwelling units) in the Municipality, of which 1,772 (35.7%) were occupied by usual residents.

The *Planning Act* and *Provincial Policy Statement (2014)* provide specific direction for housing, including:

- Providing an appropriate range and mix of housing types and densities for current and future residents of the regional market area for 10 years through *residential intensification and redevelopment* and, if necessary, lands which are *designated and available* for residential development;
- Maintaining at least a 3 year supply of serviced and zoned lands for residential intensification and redevelopment.
- Basing the land /unit supply on population forecasts from the upper-tier.

The Range and mix of housing types and densities relates to:

housing affordability: targets are required to ensure that units are available which are affordable for ownership or rental for households with incomes in the lowest 60% of the income distribution for the regional market area.

housing diversity as required to meet social, health and well-being requirements of current and future residents including special needs requirements, and all forms of intensification including second units and redevelopment.

directing development to areas with appropriate services and promoting density for efficient use of land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities, supporting active transportation and transit; establishing development standards for intensification, redevelopment, and new development which minimize housing costs and facilitate compact form while maintaining appropriate levels of public health and safety.

The *Planning Act* now requires that Councils establish Official Plan and zoning provisions to authorize a second residential unit in a detached house, semi-detached house or rowhouse OR in an ancillary structure to a house/semi-detached house / rowhouse that contains a single residential unit.

What we do right now:

- Permit low-density single-detached residential development in urban areas, rural recreation areas, and rural areas, with development standards and densities based on the level of services available
- Permit conversion of residential dwellings into multiple unit dwellings and permit secondary suites (within a dwelling) in urban areas subject to an amendment to the zoning by-law. One site-specific amendment to the Official Plan has been approved to permit a second dwelling unit above a detached garage.
- Permit residential uses above or behind many commercial uses
- Review and process site-specific zoning applications for medium-density development subject to appropriate servicing considerations.
- Permit group homes in residential zones
- Plan requires analysis of septic system impacts for new development on lots under 4047 square metres (1 acre) and septic system to be centrally located

Possible approaches or considerations

- Eliminate the separation requirement for group homes (Official Plan: "close proximity")

- Establish criteria for “as-of-right” development of secondary suites, either in existing residential dwellings or in accessory buildings; these could include:
 - Availability of water / sewer
 - Clarifying requirements for minimum lot area on partial or private services
 - Parking requirements
 - Availability of soft services and amenities (such as by permitting secondary suites in settlement areas / urban zones but not rural recreation areas (such as the “R2 resort residential” zone)).
- Investigate further to determine if use of dwellings as short-term accommodations impacts housing affordability;
- Consider provisions that enable regulation of for short-term accommodations, including settlement areas or across the Municipality.
- Reduce or eliminate minimum square footage requirements for dwellings in the Comprehensive Zoning By-law to permit smaller dwelling units as a way of increasing affordability of new construction.

Public Comments

The Tobermory Economic Sustainability Committee (TESC) submitted comments suggesting that the zoning by-law contemplate permission for Private Guest Cabins (which are permitted in the R2 Resort Residential Zone) to have plumbing and cooking facilities as a means of providing affordable housing for workers.

Comment: “Private Guest Cabins” are intended for overflow accommodation of non-paying guests in areas (typically along the shoreline) where cottages and dwellings are historically undersized. Prohibitions on plumbing and cooking facilities generally ensure that they remain accessory to the primary dwelling (and are not used as standalone dwelling units). Although the general size (up to 20 square metres) may be compatible with affordable seasonal housing, consideration should be given to potential impacts on septic systems and increased density/intensity of use, particularly in areas with undersized lots. Location can also be a factor, as affordability goals may be impacted by the distance (to work or other services and amenities) from outlying resort residential areas in the Municipality.

Mark Gehr has submitted comments regarding tents and trailers on lands in the Municipality, which requests that provision be made for trailers and tents and suggesting some rules and conditions. The letter notes that Section 6.35 (ii) of the current By-law (2002-54) prohibits the habitation of tents and trailers in the Municipality unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Comment:

The general approach has been that Trailers / tents should be located in trailer parks where they are explicitly permitted. Section 6.1.2 of the current zoning by-law permits a construction trailer (including habitation) related to an ongoing construction project for which a permit has been issued.

It is unlikely that permits or fees associated with having a trailer (versus a dwelling) on an otherwise vacant lot would cover the cost of services provided to or consumed by the lot in addition to the administration of the permit system.

The Municipality’s *Tent and Trailer By-law* provides more detailed regulations, for example regarding deposits related to a construction trailer during construction (permitted) and special occasions and conditions for setting up a trailer or tent for a short period of time on lots where there is a primary use (such as a dwelling).

It may be appropriate to consider if, and how, the comprehensive zoning by-law and a Tent and Trailer By-law passed under the *Municipal Act* can work together to address circumstances (other than construction trailers) where habitation of a Tent and Trailer may be appropriate on a property.