

THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

STAFF REPORT

DATE: September 20, 2022
TO: Committee of the Whole
FROM: Melanie Knight, Senior Planner
SUBJECT: Additional Residential Units for New Developments - Project Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Committee of the Whole accept this report as information.

BACKGROUND:

At their meeting of September 6, 2022, Council passed a resolution directing staff to report back with a project plan for a potential Official Plan Amendment to implement new policies related to Additional Residential Units in new Plans of Subdivision.

WHEREAS the national housing crisis is having a significant impact in Mississippi Mills;

AND WHEREAS diverse housing stock is a key factor in the provision of attainable housing;

AND WHEREAS Official Plan Amendment 22 brought 64 hectares of new development lands within the settlement area of the ward of Almonte;

AND WHEREAS, given the population projections provided by Lanark County to Mississippi Mills, additional growth is expected through to 2038 and beyond;

AND WHEREAS provincial legislation and now our local zoning bylaw allows for Additional Residential Units (ARU);

AND WHEREAS building Additional Residential Units can make homeownership more viable while also increasing local attainable rental stock;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to undertake a municipally-initiated Official Plan Amendment to the Community Official Plan to formalize the requirement that a certain percentage of new residential construction includes Additional Residential Units for those lands that were subject to Official Plan Amendment 22;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT staff report back to Council with a project timeline for the Official Plan Amendment at the September 20 Council meeting.

Additional Residential Units (Secondary Dwelling Units)

As part of Bill 108, changes in past few years to the *Planning Act*, Section 16(3) of the *Act* requires municipal official plans to authorize second units, known as Additional Residential Units (ARUs):

- In detached, semi-detached and row houses if an ancillary building or structure does not contain a second unit; and,
- In a building or structure ancillary to these types provided that the primary dwelling does not contain a second unit.

An ARU is a type of dwelling unit that can be inside an existing house, added on, or located in a detached accessory structure. These come in many shapes and sizes and are commonly referred to as basement apartments, coach homes, in-law suites and garage lofts. ARUs are typically smaller than the primary unit and are not restricted to only settlement areas, rather they are permitted in all areas of the municipality where there is a principal dwelling unit.

In June of this year, Council approved updates to the Secondary Dwelling Unit zoning provisions in light of Bill 108. This update did not require an Official Plan Amendment as the Official Plan already provides a policy framework related to Secondary Dwelling Units (otherwise known as ARUs). The updated zoning revised and clarified a variety of provisions to bring them into alignment with Bill 108 and the Community Official Plan policies regarding ARUs.

ARUs provide municipalities an additional tool to help develop a range of housing options in their communities, with an emphasis on providing a more attainable housing option. **Attainable Housing** is a newer term that is being used to describe housing that may be provided slightly lower than the average market costs for purchasing a home or renting a unit. It is important to note that attainable housing does not necessarily meet the common definitions of affordable housing unless the housing is secured through a legal agreement to ensure it remains affordable for the long-term.

Encouraging ARUs is important because they:

- (1) provide homeowners with alternative means of earning additional income to help meet the costs of home ownership;
- (2) support changes in demographics through housing options for immediate and extended families; and,
- (3) maximize densities to support and enhance local businesses, labour markets, and the efficient use of infrastructure.

DISCUSSION:

Project Plan

The Planning Department has developed a high-level project plan as shown in Attachment A to undertake this project.

Staff propose that some preliminary consultation with the development industry occur in the first phase of the project along with best practice research to develop a Discussion Paper to be presented to Council for further direction.

Staff anticipate that the Discussion Paper will contain a few options for Council to consider, which may include Official Plan Amendment to update the current policy framework regarding Secondary Dwelling Units.

The Discussion Paper will also provide an overview of the issues that have already been raised by Council and through other discussions, including the following:

- The relationship between ARUs and density as it relates to the updated density ranges in Official Plan Amendment 22 and servicing implications.
- The ability for a policy framework to *require* a certain percentage of ARUs in new Plans of Subdivisions versus *encourage* the development of ARUs.
- Results of the preliminary discussions with the development industry.
- Approaches to implementation of a proposed policy framework (Official Plan or other municipal policy)
- Summary of best practices
- Any additional information arising from research and the consultation with the development industry.

SUMMARY:

With the upcoming municipal election and limited Council meetings in October and November, staff recommend returning with a Discussion Paper at the meeting of December 6, 2022. This will allow Council to review the options and provide staff with direction for the project to be undertaken in Q1 of 2023.

In summary, Staff recommend that Council receive this report as information.

All of which is respectfully submitted,



Melanie Knight
Senior Planner



Ken Kelly
CAO

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Attachment A – Project Plan