



# Committee Report

<b>To:</b>	Warden Milne and Members of Grey County Council
<b>Committee Date:</b>	February 9, 2023
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	Student ARU Guide / PDR-CW-11-23
<b>Title:</b>	Grey County Additional Residential Unit Resource Guide (Student Project)
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Becky Hillyer
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Scott Taylor
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	All Municipalities in Grey County
<b>Status:</b>	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution CW30-23; Endorsed by County Council February 23, 2023, per Resolution CC19-23.

## Recommendation

- 1. That report PDR-CW-11-22 regarding the University of Guelph student project entitled 'Grey County Additional Residential Unit Resource Guide' be received for information.**

## Executive Summary

The County is partnering with students from the University of Guelph's Masters in Rural Planning & Development program to undertake a study to inform best planning practices and considerations for Additional Residential Units (ARUs) in urban and rural contexts. The study is being completed as part of the student's coursework for their Master's in Planning and will benefit the County and member municipalities. As part of the study, a team of three students will research and develop recommendations related to zoning, official plan policies, public engagement strategies, etc., to help inform the development of ARU guidelines and policies at the County and Municipal level. Students will also situate their work in the context of the County's Housing Action Plan, Climate Change Action Plan, and Age Friendly Community Strategy and Action Plan. Outreach in the form of interviews and/or surveys with municipal staff, in addition to background research and a review of municipal approaches both inside and outside of Grey will be completed to inform this project. The students will complete their work by April 2023 and have been offered the opportunity to formally present their work if timing permits.

## Background and Discussion

Additional Residential Units (previously referred to as ‘second units’) are legally established self-contained residential units that exist alongside a primary residential use. An ARU may be located within the main residential building (such as a basement or second-floor apartment); or may be contained in an accessory structure, such as a ‘tiny house,’ or an apartment above a garage. In 2019, the province approved Bill 108, which revised the *Planning Act* to require that no municipal zoning by-law nor official plan shall include provisions that limit the placement of one additional residential unit (ARU) within a primary dwelling, and one in an accessory structure. In November 2022, further refinements to these provisions were implemented through Bill 23, with a specific focus on permitting up to three residential units on residential properties in serviced settlement areas.

County Planning staff are supportive of these changes to the Act and acknowledge that ARUs have an important role to play towards increasing the affordable rental housing stock throughout the County. ARUs represent age-friendly planning by facilitating ‘aging in place’ for older adults and possibly earlier entry into the housing market by youth. ARUs also promote the objectives of the Climate Change Action Plan by densifying existing neighbourhoods and optimising use of existing services, roads, and public transit systems.

At this time, most local municipalities have not yet fully adopted recent legislative changes into their local official plans or zoning by-laws, and several key planning considerations remain to be explored. County Planning staff are partnering with students from the University of Guelph’s Rural Planning & Development program to identify and provide recommendations for key planning questions and challenges related to ARUs to support municipal decision making.

In rural areas, Guelph students will explore ARU zoning and official plan policies related to private servicing; minimum distance separation; unit size and location; natural and built heritage; compatibility with on-farm diversified uses; and others. In urban areas, key topics may include consideration for parking requirements, unit sizing, servicing impacts, heritage properties, etc.

The project has been preliminarily branded as the ‘Grey County ARU Resource Guide,’ and the study process may include:

- Conducting a baseline survey and/or interviews with municipal staff and external consultants (which may include municipal and private planners, building officials, engineering/transportation staff, economic development staff, etc., from counties within and around Grey) to determine key questions, challenges and considerations around the development of ARUs;
- Reviewing existing official plans, zoning-by-laws, and community improvement plans to determine current strategies and best practices for facilitating the development of ARUs (again, this may include both municipalities within Grey, in addition to other municipalities in Ontario);
- Recommending general updates or additions to the County’s Official Plan, municipal official plans, zoning by-laws, Community Improvement Plans, etc., to meet legislative requirements and to promote ARUs to align with the County’s strategic planning objectives;
- Developing tools and resources to help guide public engagement and general communication regarding the potential for ARUs as an available housing option.

Staff are cognizant that Grey's municipalities are differently staffed, with a range of workload capacities. A key intention of this work is to take-on some of the in-depth research that goes into creating impactful policy that could help to inform local decision-making. The results of this work are not meant to replace or supersede any independent research or consultation undertaken by any member municipality, but rather to supplement existing work and to provide a baseline for further discussion, public engagement, and contextual decision-making. This work will also complement the existing technical desktop review being undertaken by County planning staff.

As part of this study, County staff will supply background resources to the students and connect them to County and Municipal staff, as well as private planning consultants for input on this project. The student team is working within a very limited timeframe (the study needs to be completed by early April 2023), which is partnered with their workload from other classes as well.

The County has been lucky enough to partner with the University of Guelph, Toronto and Waterloo on similar projects on many other occasions, and in all instances received high-quality results. The results of these past studies have been incorporated into Recolour Grey, the Age Friendly Community Strategy, and the Climate Change Action Plan.

## Legal and Legislated Requirements

There are no legal or legislative considerations at this time.

## Financial and Resource Implications

The work completed by the student consulting team is largely without cost to the County and done as part of the coursework for their Master's degree. County staff are grateful for the students' efforts in this regard and would note that having to pay a consultant to complete a similar guideline would likely cost between \$25,000 - \$35,000.

## Relevant Consultation

Internal: Economic Development, Housing, and Planning staff will all be consulted as part of this study.

External: Municipal staff, and private planning consultants will be consulted as part of this study.

## Appendices and Attachments

*None*