



## County of Brant Council Report

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**To:** The Mayor and Members of County of Brant Council  
**From:** Negin Mousavi Berenjaghi, Development Planning Student  
**Date:** April 8, 2025  
**Report #:** ZBA2-25-NM  
**Subject:** Preliminary Zoning Changes to Permit Four Residential Units As-of-Right in Paris and St. George  
**Purpose:** For Information

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### Recommendation

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**WHEREAS** On February 11, 2025, Council directed County Staff to proceed with a zoning by-law amendment to permit four (4) units as-of-right in fully serviced areas of Paris and St. George;

**THEREFORE THAT** Council receive ZBA2-25-NM – Preliminary Zoning Changes to Permit Four Residential Units as of Right– as information;

**AND THAT** County Staff be directed to finalize zoning bylaw amendments attached to this report for placement on the future Council Meeting Agenda for consideration.

### Executive Summary

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This project began in February 2025 with [RPT-0078-25](#), where the County of Brant Council provided initial direction to explore local provisions supporting four (4) units as-of-right within the fully-serviced primary settlement areas of Paris and St. George. This initiative is one of the first steps in the County's Housing Needs Assessment process, aimed at facilitating the development of more affordable and diverse housing options while supporting focused growth and infrastructure.

This report presents the project background, analysis of the zoning bylaw amendments necessary to permit four (4) units as-of-right, and the next steps. It is respectfully requested that the Council receive this report as information, for input, and direct County Staff to finalize the draft zoning bylaw amendment for placement on the upcoming Council meeting for consideration.

### Strategic Plan Priority

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Strategic Priority 2 - Focused Growth and Infrastructure

## Impacts and Mitigation

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### Social Impacts

Enabling four (4) units as-of-right in serviced areas could increase housing options, including affordable units, to better meet community needs.

### Environmental Impacts

Encouraging infill development in fully serviced areas reduces urban sprawl, maximizes existing infrastructure, and promotes more sustainable land use.

### Economic Impacts

The Development Charges Act (DCA) provides exemptions for the first two Additional Residential Units (ARUs) in both new and existing detached houses, semi-detached houses, or rowhouses. Applying this exemption to the third ARU is not required by provincial legislation, and choosing to do so would have financial implications for the County. At this time, no amendments to the Development Charges By-law 109-24 are being proposed. Planning and Finance staff will continue to collaborate and assess whether any changes are necessary in the future.

## Report

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### Background

The Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund (CHIF) aims to accelerate the construction and upgrading of housing-enabling infrastructure, including drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste infrastructure to support increasing housing supply and densification. To qualify, municipalities with a population greater than 30,000 must commit to zoning for four (4) units as-of-right, per lot, in all low-density residential areas with municipal servicing. If received, the funding would support infrastructure upgrades in Paris and St. George, ultimately supporting increased housing options in the County.

Council moved a resolution on October 24, 2024, regarding expanded housing options ([link to resolution](#)). The resolution directed staff to promote infill development and innovative approaches to densification, desirable for reduced infrastructure costs and improved availability and affordability of housing supply. This direction has been incorporated into the County's Official Plan (2023) and will be fully integrated into the Community Permit Planning System. The zoning by-law amendment to permit four (4) units as-of-right within primary settlement areas is an additional initiative that will further support the Council's resolution.

On February 11, 2025, upon the receipt of [RPT-0078-25](#) as information, the Council directed staff to undertake a detailed analysis to identify local provisions that would permit up to four (4) residential units as-of-right per lot within Paris and St. George. Accordingly, staff have prepared a preliminary zoning by-law amendment for consideration and have initiated engagement with the public as part of the Housing Needs Assessment project on March 21, 2025, to gather input regarding four (4) units as-of-right, as well as broader community housing needs. Following the Council's direction, a draft zoning by-law amendment will be brought forward for consideration at a future Council meeting.

## Analysis

### **As-of-Right Permission**

As-of-right permission means that a property owner is entitled to use or develop their property in accordance with the property's zone without requiring a public hearing process or the Council's approval. Four (4) units as-of-right on a lot can be achieved in several ways. These may include a fourplex, where the units are equally divided, or a primary dwelling that is larger than the subsequent three ARUs. Other configurations, such as detached, semi-detached, duplex, triplex, stacked townhouse, rowhouse, and street-fronting rowhouse dwellings, can also achieve four units. If the four units are achieved as a result of the construction of a new primary dwelling, additions to an existing primary dwelling, or interior/basement conversions, they must meet the standard regulations of the associated zone. Four units can also be achieved through detached ARUs, either by converting an existing accessory structure or constructing a new detached dwelling. Staff note that regardless of the configuration—whether through a new primary dwelling, additions, interior/basement conversions, or detached ARUs—a building permit is required. Before proceeding, homeowners or applicants should consult with the municipality to ensure that the proposed units and configuration comply with zoning regulations, that adequate municipal services are available, and that all relevant zoning provisions can be satisfied.

### **Potential Uptake of Four Units Initiative**

The County's current zoning regulations permit up to three (3) residential units per lot as-of-right in fully serviced areas, including one primary unit and two ARUs. The previous staff report highlighted that despite permissions for three-unit properties, all ARU developments to date have only accommodated two units (One primary unit and one ARU). *Table 1* below illustrates the maximum estimated potential uptake of four (4) units as-of-right in Paris and St. George, based on the assumptions that the property is located in a residential zone, the existing building footprint covers less than 50% of the lot area, and the lot size is 350 square metres or greater, all of which are common characteristics of Urban Residential zones. This estimate does not include the existing ARUs. As mentioned in the previous staff report ([RPT-0078-25](#)), current zoning regulations have largely restricted the uptake of detached ARUs, with the majority being developed as attached or basement units.

*Table 1: Potential Uptake of Four Units As-of-Right in Paris and St. George*

<b>Settlement Area</b>	<b>Number of Parcels</b>	<b>Increase in Units</b>
<b>Paris</b>	1040	3120
<b>St. George</b>	345	1035
<b>Maximum Total</b>		4155

Staff would like to note that a small percentage of lots are likely to develop with up to four units. Even further still, such developments are likely to happen over time. Certain lot characteristics, such as lot frontage, parking, driveway, pedestrian access, setbacks, and the existing building type itself, can limit the potential uptake of four (4) units as-of-right initiative. These characteristics will be further explored in the following sections.

The potential uptake of the four-unit initiative can also be impacted by available servicing. Both the County's Official Plan (2023) and Zoning By-law 61-16 support ARUs in settlement areas where adequate and available municipal water, sanitary services, and capacity are

verified by the County to ensure that site conditions are suitable for the long-term provision of such services with no negative impact.

### **Building Configuration**

To enable four (4) units as-of-right, a change is proposed to add a regulation that would allow for up to four (4) units on a fully serviced residential lot that includes the primary dwelling unit together with:

1. Up to three ARUs within or attached to the primary dwelling unit, or
2. Up to two additional residential units within or attached to the primary dwelling unit and up to one additional residential unit in a detached accessory structure, or
3. Up to one additional dwelling unit within or attached to the primary dwelling unit and up to two additional residential units in a detached accessory structure.

Some examples of ARUs include additions to the existing dwelling, above garage additions, accessory structure conversions, interior/basement conversions, and new detached dwellings. The proposed configurations would support these ARU types while maintaining flexibility in residential development. In addition to the newly proposed regulation mentioned above, it is also necessary that Subsection (iv) of the ARU regulations be removed, as it restricts the number and types of ARUs that can be permitted on a fully serviced lot.

### **Proposed Changes to Urban Residential Zones**

The County's Urban Residential (R) Zones, including Residential Singles (R1), Residential Singles and Semis (R2), and Residential Multiple Low Density (RM1) allow for low-density residential developments. The least permissible zone, the Residential Singles (R1) permits Single- Detached Dwellings, Group Homes, and existing Duplex Dwellings, whereas RM1 Zone accommodates Single Detached, Semi-Detached, Rowhouse, Street-Fronting Rowhouse, Stacked Townhouse, Duplex, and Triplex Dwellings, as well as Group Homes and Lodging Houses. Staff are of the opinion that these zones have the greatest potential to accommodate gentle infill through minor revisions to use definitions and other relevant zoning regulations.

Currently, fourplexes are only permitted in Residential Multiple Medium Density (RM2) and Residential Multiple High Density (RM3) zones. A change is proposed to allow fourplexes in all Urban Residential zones. Additionally, current zoning regulations allow duplexes only as existing uses in Residential Singles (R1) and Residential Singles and Semis (R2). An amendment is proposed to remove this footnote, allowing both new duplexes and existing buildings to be converted into duplexes through additions within these zones. To minimize unnecessary changes to multiple definitions, a footnote is proposed to be added for the permitted uses in Urban Residential zones. This footnote will clarify that, notwithstanding any definition in Zoning By-law 61-16, up to four (4) units are permitted within or on the same lot as singles, semis, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, stacked townhouses, rowhouses, and street fronting rowhouses. This list of dwelling types will also be reflected in the ARU definition to provide greater clarity on where ARUs may be permitted.

The definition of "converted dwelling" is proposed to be removed due to redundancy. Converted dwellings are not a permitted use within Urban Residential zones and have only been applied in two site-specific zones (one in the R2 zone and one in the RM1 zone). Removing this definition would provide greater flexibility for ARU types and avoid

unnecessary classifications, as converted dwellings are already included within the broader definition of an ARU.

No changes are being proposed to the lot area, lot frontage, setbacks, landscaped open space, primary dwelling coverage, and building height requirements for Urban Residential zones. This will ensure that gentle density uplift through four (4) units as-of-right initiative will be considerate of the surrounding building characteristics while providing more flexible housing options.

## **Parking**

The county's Official Plan (2023) and Zoning By-law 61-16 require one (1) additional parking space per ARU in addition to the required parking spaces for the principal dwelling. This requirement, along with a minimum driveway width of 5.6 metres, a minimum lot frontage of 11 metres, unobstructed access from the municipal right-of-way, and a minimum of 30% landscaped open space would limit the number of parcels eligible for third or fourth units.

Acknowledging the limitations resulting from minimum parking requirements, staff are not recommending any amendments to these regulations at this time. Currently, in addition to the required one (1) space per ARU, County's Zoning By-law 61-16 requires two (2) off-street parking spaces, as well as 0.35 visitor parking spaces per unit for rowhouses, stacked townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes. Additionally, two (2) off-street parking spaces per unit are required for dwellings with frontage on a public street. As noted, these parking requirements for both the main building and ARU(s) would limit the potential for adding third or fourth units.

## **Building Height**

As part of the four (4) units as-of-right initiative, staff are proposing to allow up to two (2) detached ARUs, whereas up to one (1) is currently permitted. This change would enable the addition of a second-storey unit within a detached ARU. Under the County's zoning regulations, any ARU located within a detached dwelling must meet the requirements for an accessory structure or building. Currently, the maximum permitted building height for a detached ARU is 4.5 metres on lots within Urban Residential zones. Recognizing that the existing maximum permitted building height would restrict the inclusion of a second storey, an amendment is proposed to increase the limit from the 4.5 m to 6 metres, applicable only to Urban Residential zones. The proposed height is based on the Ontario example for a two-storey accessory dwelling unit as outlined in the [Housing Design Catalogue](#) by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Additionally, any rooftop amenity space above the second storey of a detached ARU is proposed to be prohibited unless it meets the maximum height for an accessory building or structure.

ARUs within or attached to the primary dwelling are subject to the requirements of the primary dwelling. The maximum permitted building height in Urban Residential zones will remain unchanged, as the existing maximum building height requirements are adequate to accommodate the permitted uses within these zones.

## **Lot Coverage**

There are two regulations that apply to the maximum lot coverage for a detached ARU within Urban Residential zones. The first regulation, governing accessory uses, permits the lesser of 15% of the total lot area or 95 square metres for detached ARUs. The Urban Residential

zone requirements further specify that a maximum lot coverage of 40% applies to dwelling units, with a maximum overall lot coverage of 45% permitted. The additional 5% is only allocated for accessory buildings or structures.

To provide more straightforward direction and prevent potential misinterpretation, an amendment is proposed to remove the latter regulation. This change will simplify the regulation by allowing a coverage of up to 40% for the primary dwelling unit, while detached ARU(s) can have a maximum lot coverage of 15% of the total lot area or 95 square metres, whichever is lesser. All permitted uses within Urban Residential zones, including fourplexes, will be subject to the current lot coverage, with no changes proposed.

### **Setbacks**

A minimum of 1.2 metres for interior side yard and rear yard setbacks is currently required for detached ARUs within Urban Residential zones. Staff recommend an additional condition to require a minimum 3-metre setback where a second-storey window, balcony, or exterior stairs face a lot line. This would ensure increased separation of detached ARUs from adjacent parcels and provide adequate buffer from the neighbouring properties, avoiding potential nuisance and privacy issues. Other setback requirements, including the minimum street setback to the attached garage and habitable portions of the dwelling, as well as the separation distance between buildings on the same lot, will remain unchanged. Also, no changes are proposed to the setbacks for the main dwelling.

### **Lot severance**

Under the County's Official Plan (2023), an ARU may qualify for severance from the primary dwelling subject to compliance with consent policies and meeting the zoning requirements. If qualified, both the retained and severed lots can accommodate four units. It is the staff's understanding that very few lots within Paris and St. George would be eligible for such lot severances, as many parcels do not meet the required lot area, lot coverage, setbacks, lot width, lot frontage, parking, and landscaped open space. Additionally, since the preferred method of servicing for ARUs in urban settlement areas is through infrastructure provided by the principal dwelling, severances that could result in additional servicing requirements may not be supported by County staff.

### **Summary and Recommendations**

Staff have performed a detailed analysis of the County's zoning regulations and are of the opinion that low-density Urban Residential zones hold the greatest potential to support four (4) units as-of-right in fully serviced areas of Paris and St. George. The following is a list of proposed key changes for consideration:

- Add fourplexes as a permitted use for all Urban Residential zones.
- Remove the "Existing Only" condition for duplexes within R1 and R2 zones.
- Add a list of uses that would allow for ARUs in the ARU definition.
- Remove the definition for a converted dwelling to avoid unnecessary classification of ARUs.
- Add a regulation regarding building configuration and the number of permitted ARUs in fully serviced areas.
- Increase the maximum structure height for detached ARUs from 4.5 metres to 6 metres.

- Require a minimum of 3-metre interior side yard and rear yard setback where a second-storey window, balcony, or exterior stairs of a detached ARU face a lot line.
- Prohibit rooftop amenity space above the second storey of a detached ARU unless it meets the maximum height for accessory structures or buildings.
- Remove the 45% overall lot coverage limit in low-density Urban Residential zones, allowing a maximum of 40% lot coverage for the primary dwelling and up to 15% or 95 square metres for detached ARUs, whichever is lesser.

Other minor changes are proposed to ensure the consistency and clarity of regulations (see Attachment 1 for more details). No additional changes will be made to the lot area, lot frontage, setbacks, parking requirements, building height, and landscaped open space requirements to ensure that the future uptake of four (4) units as-of-right takes into account the surrounding building characteristics.

As part of the next steps, County staff will further review the zoning regulations and preliminary amendments based on the direction received from the Council and the public and will present a draft zoning bylaw amendment for consideration at an upcoming Council meeting.

**Attachments**

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1. Preliminary Zoning Changes to Permit Four Units in Low-Density Urban Residential Zones

**Reviewed By**

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Jeremy Vink, Director of Planning  
 Brandon Kortleve, Manager of Policy Planning

**Copied To**

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Alysha Dyjach, General Manager of Development Services  
 Mark Maxwell, Director of Engineering and Infrastructure Planning  
 Heather Mifflin, Director of Finance, Treasurer

**By-law and/or Agreement**

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By-law Required	No
Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and /or Clerk	No