

Report to Committee of the Whole

Department Report No. PED-03-2023

From: Jennifer Laforest, Senior Planner

Date: June 8, 2023

Subject: Tiny Homes

Recommendation

BE IT RESOLVED THAT; the Committee of the Whole recommend staff carry out public consultation and return with proposed zoning by-law amendment to increase the number Tiny Homes in Champlain Township.

Reason for the Report

Administration frequently receives questions from property owners regarding opportunities for the placement of tiny homes in backyards and vacant lands.

In recent years there is increasing interest in the role tiny homes as it relates to increasing housing supply. This report provides an overview of regulations impacting the development of tiny homes in the community for review by the Committee of the Whole.

Background

A tiny home is a small, self-contained dwelling unit between 25 and 37 square meters (250-400 sq ft). To be considered a dwelling unit, the tiny home must contain a full bathroom, kitchen and sleeping area, be located on a permanent foundation and have access to utilities, water, and sanitary services.

Tiny homes are often featured on wheeled platforms. Platform tiny homes are not considered residential uses. Platform dwellings are not regulated by the Ontario Building Code.

Proposed Uses

Tiny homes have two primary development applications – as ‘second dwelling units’ and ‘pocket neighbourhoods’.

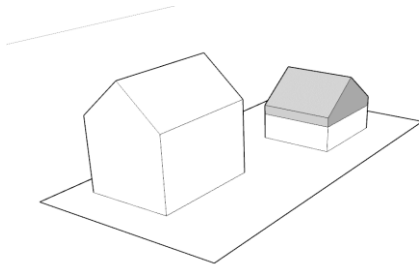
Second Dwelling Units

Tiny homes are currently permitted in low density residential zones – R1, R2, RR and RE. Tiny homes may also be constructed as small ‘single detached housing’. One tiny home may be constructed as a stand alone second dwelling on a property with an existing single detached dwelling. Should Council wish to allow more than one tiny homes on a property with an existing single detached dwelling, it may consider text amendments to the zoning by-law.

Example Amendment to the Zoning By-law:

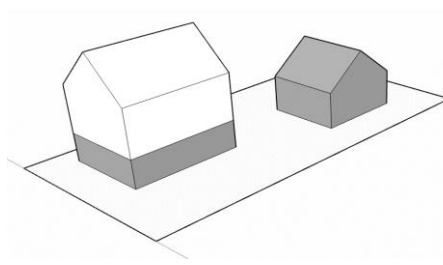
3.1.1 (c) A maximum of ~~one~~ two second units are permitted within ~~one~~ two separate building or structures ancillary to a single detached dwelling.

Example Implementation:



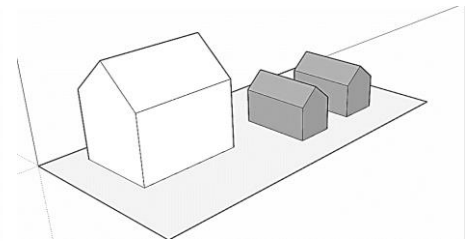
Existing Regulation

Second Dwelling Above Detached Garage **or** as Basement Suite



Bill 23

Second Dwelling in Detached Garage **and** Basement Suite



Tiny Home

Two second dwelling units in two separate buildings

‘Pocket Neighbourhood’

A cluster of four or more tiny home dwellings on a single lot is often referred to as a pocket neighbourhood. These forms of development share amenity and parking areas.

There is currently no use definition in the Champlain Township Zoning By-law that would accommodate 4 tiny homes on a residential lot. A project proponent wishing to develop a pocket neighbourhood would have to apply for zoning amendment (site specific zoning permission) prior to building this type of project.

Should Council wish to allow for the development of pocket neighbourhoods, it may wish to direct Administration to introduce a new use definition in the Zoning By-law.

Example Amendment to the Zoning By-law:



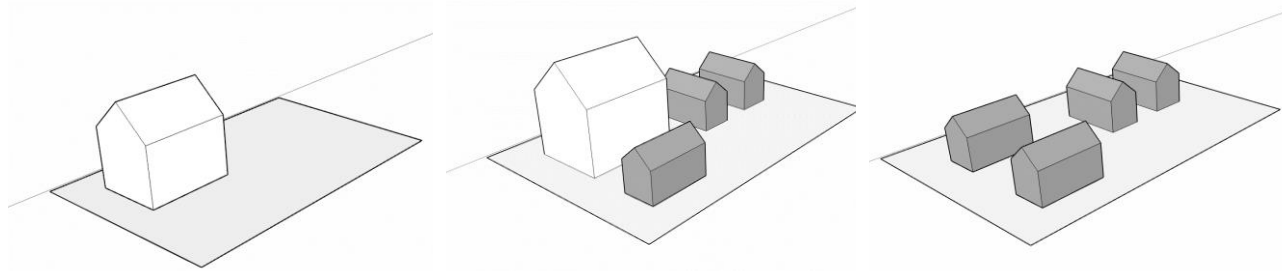
2.94 Dwelling, Multiple shall mean a dwelling unit in a building containing four or more dwelling units that would not be considered any other type of dwelling unit as defined by this By-law.

R2 Zone Requirements

iii) dwelling, multiple

Lot Area (minimum)	600m ²
Lot Frontage (minimum)	20m
Yard Requirements (minimum) -	
	Front 6 m
	Rear 7.5 m
	Exterior Side 4 m
	Interior Side 1.2 m
Building Height (maximum)	10.5 m
Lot Coverage (maximum)	50% Floor
Area per Dwelling unit (minimum)	30 m ²

Implementation



Existing R2 Lot with Single Detached Dwelling

Lot Conversion - Multiple Dwelling - Retention of Single Detached Dwelling and 3 Tiny Homes

4 Tiny Homes on Previously Vacant Lot

Considerations

Local Housing Needs

Housing needs assessments indicate the most pressing housing needs in Champlain Township and Prescott Russell are for medium density housing (row housing) and purpose-built rental housing.

A summary of housing and land use needs is provided in attachment.



Dwelling Size

Champlain Township's Zoning By-law does not provide a minimum floor area for second dwelling units. The minimum dwelling size is regulated by the Ontario Building Code. Regulating dwelling size may be important for pocket neighbourhoods as small dwelling size is potentially limiting for families.

Champlain Township's Zoning By-law regulates minimum dwelling size for medium and high-density residential developments. A minimum floor area of 70m² is required for row housing developments, and a minimum floor area of 40m² is required for bachelor / studio apartment dwellings.

Density

Low density land use represents the largest proportion of land inventory in Champlain Township.

Density is determined by the number of dwelling units per hectare.

Once separation distances, parking, amenity areas and setbacks are taken into consideration, the dwelling density for Tiny Homes is comparable to Residential One (R1) or Residential Two (R2) zoning.

Affordability

Tiny homes are not necessarily affordable housing but diversify housing options in desirable existing mature neighbourhoods.

Rental housing may be particularly beneficial with regards to single person households; low income households and areas with high net migration. Tiny Homes increase the proportion of rental accommodation, support inter-generational living and increase housing affordability by giving homeowners added revenue streams. Tiny Homes as Pocket Neighbourhoods can increase rental housing in existing low density residential areas. Further investigation would be required to determine if Tiny Homes as Pocket Neighbourhoods qualify for subdivision.

Circulation Comments

The draft report was circulated to internal departments for comments.

Building and By-law Department

- *In 2022, Champlain Township issued 18 building permits for detached residential garages and 2 permits for second dwelling units.*
- *Minimum Building Size – Regulated by The Building Code*



- *If more than two accessory dwellings are proposed on a residential lot, the property owners applying for a building permit may need to upgrade the lateral connection. Multiple lateral connections from one residential lot is not permitted.*

Public Works

- *The recent changes to the Planning Act mean that pocket neighborhoods are exempt from Municipal Engineering review typically carried out as part of Site Plan Approval.*
- *Pocket Neighbourhoods would also not qualify for review as a Draft Plan of Subdivision.*
- *Champlain Township may wish to prepare a technical sheet specific for Pocket Neighbourhoods to ensure that these forms of housing are provided with appropriate site development standards (grading, landscaping, vehicle access, emergency access).*
- *Parking areas and internal driveways in pocket neighborhoods are on private property and therefore not eligible for municipal winter maintenance.*

Planning Department

- *Tiny Homes are best suited as infill developments in low density residential areas.*
- *Champlain Township has many residential lots in urban areas suited for infill.*
- *Public consultation should be carried out to better understand barriers and community preferences on the issue of tiny homes.*

Council Strategic Plan

Housing Affordability was not identified as a priority in the 2022–2026 Council Strategic Plan.

The SOARR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Risks, Results) analysis, provided the following discussion points:

- *Strengths: “The cost of housing in the Township is relatively lower than in Ottawa and Montreal, with a wide variety of built and outdoor recreation amenities. The Township offers a spectrum of housing types and lifestyle amenities that appeal to various potential residents.”*
- *Risks: “Rising Housing Prices: New development and residents relocating from cities have caused rising prices throughout the Township, creating concerns that young people may be challenged to find local housing.”*

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report.



Any zoning by-law amendments supported by the Committee of the Whole would be included in the next round of housekeeping amendments.

Options/Alternatives

The Committee of the Whole may provide the following responses to this report.

1. Receive this report as information and take no further action at this time.
2. Recommend staff to return with proposed amendments to the zoning by-law as per the Committee's comments;
3. Recommend staff carry out public consultation and return with more information.

Conclusion

Tiny homes may have a small but potentially positive role to play in diversifying the housing stock in Champlain Township.

Access to safe and good quality housing is an important determinant in quality of life as well as physical and mental health. Small, targeted amendments to the Zoning by-law as proposed may help create additional forms of rental housing in Champlain Township.

Respectfully submitted by

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Kevin Tessier
Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

Attachments

- A. Tiny Homes in Ontario, Provincial Booklet
- B. Staff Presentation
- C. Housing, Land Use and Policy Summary