

Scope of the Issue

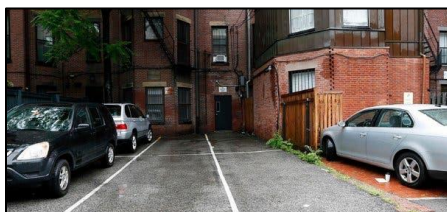
The Official Plan (OP) Review presents an opportunity to establish policies that encourage a range and diversity of housing options. In addition, developing policies that establish what is an appropriate target for residential intensification in the Town, while addressing neighbourhood design and compatibility considerations, are important to maintaining a high quality of life for residents in Prescott. Compatibility considerations may include, for example, how one housing type relates to another housing type in the same neighbourhood (e.g. a multi-unit apartment on a lot adjacent to a low-rise dwelling), or a commercial use adjacent to a residential area.

Provincial Policy Direction

Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990

The Planning Act sets out matters of provincial interest that municipal Councils and other planning authorities shall have regard to, including but not limited to, the adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing.

The More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 (Bill 108) resulted in amendments to the Planning Act regarding additional residential units. The Act now requires that municipal Official Plans allow for additional residential units in detached, semi-detached and row houses, in both the primary dwelling and in ancillary buildings or structures. In effect, this permits a total of three (3) residential units on a single lot: two (2) residential units in a detached, semi-detached or row house (e.g. the main dwelling unit and a basement apartment), as well as one (1) additional residential unit in an ancillary building or structure (e.g. a detached garage).



New York Times, 2013

Ontario Regulation 299/19 sets out requirements and standards to remove barriers for additional residential units to be built. For example, any required parking space for an additional residential unit can be provided through tandem parking (i.e. back-to-back parking, as pictured to the left).

Provincial Policy Statement, 2020

The Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS) was updated with an increased emphasis on municipalities planning for and encouraging a variety of housing options, including through residential intensification and redevelopment, to meet the social, health, economic and well-being requirements of current and future residents (Policies 1.1.3.3, 1.4.1, 1.4.3).

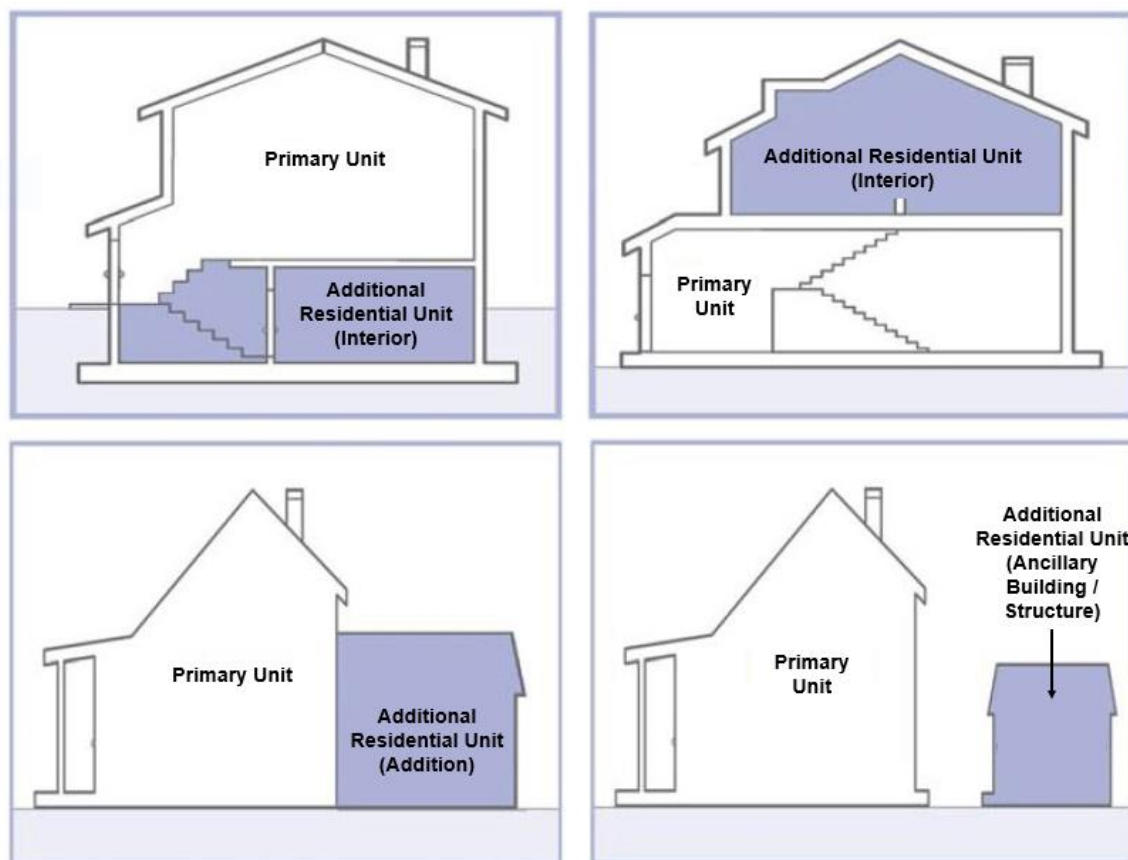
“Housing options” is defined as “a range of housing types such as, but not limited to single-detached, semi-detached, rowhouses, townhouses, stacked townhouses, multiplexes, additional residential units, tiny homes, multi-residential buildings. The term can also refer to a variety of housing arrangements and forms such as, but not limited to life lease community homes, affordable housing, housing for people with special needs, and housing related to employment, institutional or

educational uses. Permitting and facilitating a range of housing options also helps to support long-term economic prosperity, different lifestyle and affordability needs, and age-friendly planning objectives, such as allowing residents to age in place.

Housing Options

In support of intensification, Official Plans may include policies that encourage the provision of a range of housing options and housing arrangements, which can also form part of municipal affordable housing strategies. The Province of Ontario is encouraging municipalities to support and enable diversity in housing options through their Official Plans and Zoning By-laws, including:

Additional Residential Units: self-contained residential units with a private kitchen, bathroom facilities and sleeping areas within dwellings or within structures ancillary to a dwelling. “Ancillary” means buildings or structures that are secondary and complementary to a house (e.g. a detached garage). Additional residential units require a Building Permit, and must comply with the Ontario Building Code, Fire Code, municipal Zoning By-laws, and other municipal by-laws (e.g. Property Standards By-law). They were formerly referred to as “second units” or “secondary dwelling units”, prior to Planning Act changes.



Adapted from MMAH, 2019

Housing and Compatibility

Discussion Paper – March 2021

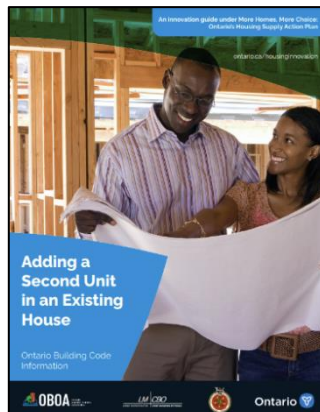


MMAH, 2019

Tiny homes: small, private and self-contained dwelling units with living and dining areas, kitchen and bathroom facilities, and a sleeping area. They are intended for year-round use. Tiny homes can be a primary home or a separate structure on a property that already has an existing dwelling (i.e. they can be a detached additional residential unit, as described above). Tiny homes are not campers, RVs, cottages, or other structures used on a seasonal basis. They must comply with the Ontario Building Code, Fire Code, municipal Zoning By-laws, and other municipal by-laws. Under the Building Code, tiny homes cannot be under 17.5 m² (188 ft²), and are generally less than 37 m² (400 ft²).

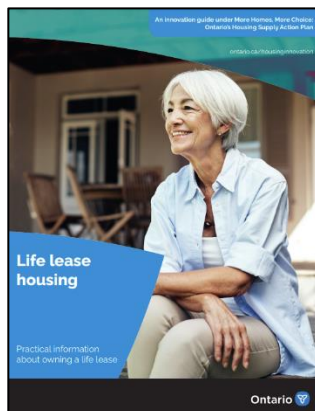
Co-ownership housing: a shared living arrangement where two or more people own and live in a home together (shared living spaces or separate units).

Life lease housing: a housing arrangement in which the buyer purchases an interest in a property, which gives the buyer the right to occupy a unit for a long period of time, often for their lifetime.



The Province of Ontario has recently published a [series of helpful guides](#) for homeowners, landlords, and home seekers to assist in understanding various housing options and navigating the design and building process, including:

- "Adding a Second Unit in an Existing House";
- "Building or Buy a Tiny Home";
- "Life Lease Housing"; and
- "Co-owning a Home".



Existing Town Official Plan Policies

Housing Options

The Town's existing Official Plan (Approved 2006, Updated 2018) ("existing OP") directs the development of new housing to locations where infrastructure and public services are readily available. It emphasizes the need for residential intensification to accommodate residential growth, while making the most of available land within the Town's municipal boundary. Housing options such as higher-density multi-family housing, garden suites, and secondary dwelling units (now referred to as "additional residential units") are supported, in accordance with the Planning Act. OP policies also support the provision of non-profit housing by private and non-profit housing corporations.

Within areas designated for residential development and in existing residential neighbourhoods, the OP policies focus on maintaining lower density housing types, including single-detached, semi-detached and duplex dwellings; however, residential intensification is permitted, including townhouses and other types of ground-oriented multiple residential development that is compatible with respect to built form, scale, urban design, and streetscape. Higher density residential development is directed to the Downtown Core, where mixed land uses are also encouraged, including retail and commercial services, and residential units on upper floors of ground-floor commercial buildings.

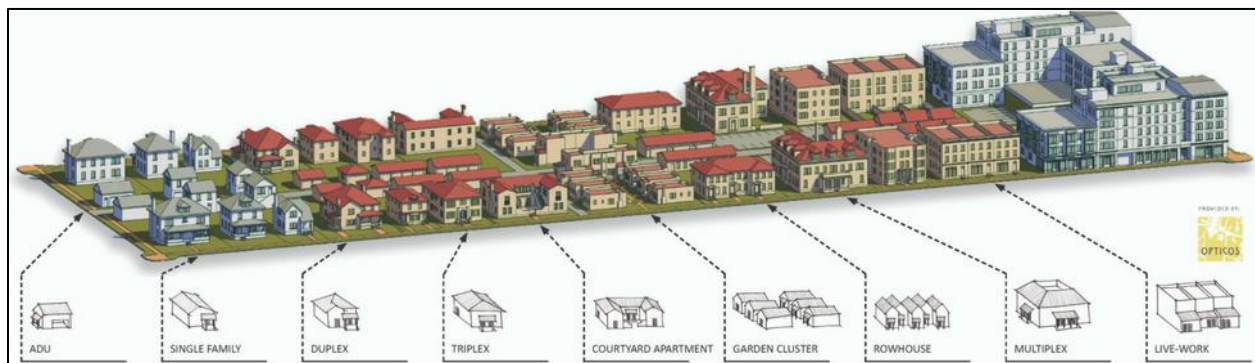


Illustration of different housing densities, AIA Austin

Neighbourhood Character and Compatibility

In land use planning, "compatibility" between different types of adjacent land uses considers how one land use (e.g. commercial or industrial) may impact another more sensitive land use (e.g. residential). Official Plans may contain policies related to ensuring compatibility between different types of housing, especially infill and intensification, as well as commercial development. Compatible development may not necessarily be the same as existing development, but should complement, enhance, and coexist with existing development without causing undue adverse impacts on surrounding properties.

The Town's existing OP contains strong policies and site plan control requirements related to ensuring land use compatibility between new and existing development. For example, the Town currently

requires site plan approval for all new non-residential development (e.g. commercial development), residential development of three (3) or more units, and waterfront development. The Site Plan Control process is a tool under the Planning Act that municipalities can use to ensure new development is designed appropriately and minimizes potential impacts on neighbouring properties. Through Site Plan Control, the Town can address design matters with proponents, such as the proposed location of buildings, landscaping, parking, traffic and pedestrian access, and drainage.

Many municipalities build on their Official Plan policies regarding compatibility and Site Plan Control by introducing design guidelines or policies to support the future development of design guidelines for residential intensification. For example, the City of Ottawa has developed “Urban Design Guidelines for Low-rise Infill Housing” (2012), which are intended to help guide infill development that will enhance streetscapes, support and extend established landscaping, be a more compact urban form to consume less land and natural resources, and achieve a good fit into existing neighbourhoods. Other municipalities are undertaking mature neighbourhood studies to identify neighbourhood character areas and help manage residential intensification and redevelopment by developing a series of recommendations to be implemented over time. Considering the Town’s existing OP contains policies to support the implementation of design guidelines for the Downtown Core, there could be consideration given to establishing policies to enable the development of design guidelines specific to infill development in the Town’s existing residential neighbourhoods.

Community Survey Input

A community survey was held from October 9 to 30, 2020 to collect feedback from residents on policy issues to be addressed as part of the Town’s OP Review. The survey received 159 responses. The following sections provide a summary of key feedback provided by respondents, organized under key policy issues related to housing and neighbourhood design.

Housing Options and Residential Intensification:

- When asked what types of residential intensification are compatible with existing residential development and neighbourhoods in Prescott. Respondents’ order of preference was as follows:
 - semi-detached dwellings (70%);
 - townhouses (66%);
 - low-rise apartments (up to 4 storeys) (56%);
 - duplexes (51%);
 - link-detached dwellings (41%);
 - additional residential units (36%); and
 - stacked townhouses (34%).
- 68% of respondents shared that residential intensification should be directed anywhere that there are existing residential uses, and 30% of respondents felt that residential intensification is most appropriate in the Downtown Core.

- Several respondents identified specific areas where more residential development should be directed, including: southeast of Highway 401 and the Independent Grocer; behind the golf course; and an extension of the Maplevue Subdivision.

Maximum Building Heights:

- While not necessarily specific to residential development, survey respondents were asked what the maximum building height should be in the Downtown Core, on streets like King Street and Water Street. Fifty-seven percent (57%) preferred a maximum building height of four (4) storeys, and 20% suggested six (6) storeys.
- On lands near Highway 401 (e.g. Edward Street North, Prescott Centre Drive, Development Drive), respondents were generally comfortable with increased maximum building heights of six (6) storeys (30%), 10 or more storeys (22%), and four (4) storeys (20%).

Compatibility:

- When asked to identify the biggest concerns around compatibility between different types of land uses (e.g. commercial uses adjacent to residential uses), respondents indicated noise (82%), parking / traffic (72%), and views / shadowing (61%) to be the issues of highest concern. Building separation and setbacks (39%) and light spillover (39%) were also selected.
- When asked to identify the biggest concerns around compatibility if, for example, a six (6)-storey apartment building were to be proposed on a vacant lot next to an existing residential area comprised of one-to-two (1-2) storey residential dwellings, respondents indicated privacy and overlook due to building height or balconies (70%), views / shadowing (61%), parking / traffic (60%), and design of apartment building (59%) to be the issues of highest concern.

Official Plan Review – Policy Recommendations

Housing Options

Recommendation 1: Update existing housing supply policies to be consistent with the 2020 PPS, which requires that municipalities maintain the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 15 years through residential intensification, redevelopment, and if necessary, lands designated and available for residential development. The existing OP specifies maintaining the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 10 years.

Recommendation 2: Maintain and enhance existing OP policies that encourage and support a variety of housing types, including ground-oriented multiple residential development, higher-density multi-family housing, garden suites, additional residential units, affordable housing, and non-profit housing.

Recommendation 3: Maintain existing OP policies that permit residential intensification in existing residential neighbourhoods, including townhouses and other types of ground-oriented multiple residential development.

Recommendation 4: Review existing OP policies for existing residential neighbourhoods which specify general maximum densities of 36 units per hectare for lower density development, and 50 units per hectare for forms of residential intensification, in consultation with Town staff. This review should consider if these policies have been generally appropriate with respect to recent development proposals, or whether the policies have resulted in hindrances to potential development.

Recommendation 5: Maintain existing OP policies which permit a range of low, medium and high density residential uses in new residential areas, while maintaining an overall density and development pattern which is in keeping with the traditional residential neighbourhoods in the Town.

Recommendation 6: Revise existing OP policies for secondary dwelling units to update the terminology to “additional residential units”, and to clearly permit up to two (2) additional residential units on a lot with a single-detached, semi-detached, or rowhouse dwelling that is the primary dwelling unit.

Neighbourhood Character and Compatibility

Recommendation 7: Maintain existing OP policies that support proposed development which complements and contributes to the character of the Town.

Recommendation 8: The Town could consider including a policy for the future development of a Neighbourhood Character Study and Urban Design Guidelines. Such a study could be specifically targeted at identifying the prevalent character that distinguishes the various residential neighbourhoods in Prescott, in consultation with residents, and could result in the preparation of urban design guidelines for residential infill development, that would assist in ensuring future development respects and enhances that character.

Recommendation 9: Maintain existing OP policies around compatibility, including:

- The requirement for site plan approval for all new non-residential development (e.g. commercial development), residential development of 3 units or more, and waterfront development in the Town;
- The requirement that all new residential development, including residential intensification in existing neighbourhoods, provides adequate off-street parking;
- Protection of new residential development that abuts potentially incompatible land uses, including Highway 401 and CN Railway line, and requirements to minimize the potential off-site impacts of these uses by buffering and screening the new development, including implementation of required minimum separation distances and other mitigation measures;
- Ensuring that all new commercial development, and commercial intensification in existing areas, provides adequate off-street parking, and avoiding access to commercial development from residential streets;

- Consideration for the preparation of design guidelines for commercial development outside the Downtown Core to address issues such as streetscape design (including landscaping, lighting), screening and fencing; and parking; and
- The need to minimize potential off-site impacts of new commercial development (e.g. noise, light pollution) on adjacent residential neighbourhoods by buffering and screening new development.

Recommendation 10: Add a new section in the Official Plan entitled “Compatibility and Built Form” that sets out criteria for consideration by Town staff in reviewing development and redevelopment applications. Specific criteria may include: height and massing; landscaping; lighting; noise and air quality; outdoor amenity areas; parking; safety; setbacks; shadowing; traffic impacts; transition; and vehicular access. Proponents could be required to address compatibility criteria in Planning Rationales that accompany development applications, to demonstrate how their proposed development responds to the criteria and existing development on surrounding properties.