

Motion C24(225) **Mini-Homes as Accessory Dwelling Units**

Planning Advisory Committee
March 18, 2025

Planning & Development



EAST HANTS



Background

In June of 2024, East Hants Municipal Council passed the following motion:

Moved that Council direct staff to review land use regulations that are preventing small manufactured housing units from being used as accessory dwelling units.

Background

Under the East Hants Land Use Bylaw, mini-homes are not permitted to be used as an Accessory Dwelling Unit within a Residential Zone (R1, R2, CR, LR zones) as per section 6.2.5.

Mini-home dwellings are not permitted as a main use in any of our residential zones.

6.2.5. Width to Length Ratio for Residential Buildings

*A development permit shall not be issued for a residential dwelling in an CR, LR, R1 or R2 Zone unless the following design standard for the dwelling is adhered to, exclusive of any additions: the length of the dwelling must not exceed the most common minimum width of the dwelling (normally measured at the centre point of the dwelling) by a ratio of 3 to 1, that is the length must not exceed 3 times the prevalent width, except for the replacement of mini-home homes which were lawfully existing at the time the Bylaw came into effect. **Mini-home dwellings as per the definition are not permitted.** Residential dwellings where the majority of the structure is constructed using shipping containers shall be exempt from the width to length ratio requirements of this section.*

Proposal

Should PAC and Council wish to consider small mini-homes as accessory dwelling units, an amendment to remove the section which states mini-home dwellings are not permitted under section 6.2.5 is required

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As per the permitted uses table, mini-homes are still not permitted as a main use in a residential zone

Proposal

Regulations under section 3.14: *Accessory Dwelling Units*, including the design requirements would prohibit the use of a mini-home as an accessory dwelling unit. This regulation states:

Accessory Dwelling Unit Exterior: Must match the main dwelling in building material type, cladding colour, roof type, and roof pitch. Shipping containers designed as garden suites are exempt from the requirement to match the main dwelling.

Shipping containers used as accessory dwelling units are exempt from design requirements.

An amendment to exempt mini-home dwellings from the garden suite height requirement and the design requirements should be considered to permit these dwellings as accessory dwelling units. There are no other proposed changes to the remaining regulations including maximum size, setbacks, etc.

At their meeting in January 2025, Council authorized staff to come back with a report regarding the design requirements for accessory dwelling units (stick-built units). In the interest of not delaying the current proposed amendments, the motion dealing with the design requirements is not discussed in this report. That report will be presented at a future meeting.

Proposal

Municipal Planning Strategy policy amendments are required in order to permit mini-home dwellings as accessory dwelling units

Policy RD2, Policy RD16, and Policy RD21 specifically reference that accessory dwelling units shall be designed to maintain the appearance of a single detached dwelling

An amendment to remove the requirement that accessory dwelling units shall be designed as a single detached dwelling is also required in order to permit mini-home dwellings as accessory dwelling units.

Proposal

- RD2: Council shall encourage context sensitive intensification and infill residential development that complements surrounding homes and preserves or enhances neighbourhood integrity. This goal shall be achieved through measures such as:
- a) Accessory dwelling unit regulations within appropriate residential areas subject ~~to requirements designed to maintain the appearance of a single detached dwelling~~ and minimize impact on adjacent properties and the surrounding neighbourhood.
- RD16: Council shall permit accessory dwelling units in the Established Residential Neighbourhood (R1) Zone to provide 1 additional dwelling unit ~~subject to requirements designed to maintain the appearance of a single detached dwelling~~ and minimize impact on adjacent land uses and the surrounding neighbourhood.
- RD21 Council shall permit accessory dwelling units in the Two Dwelling Unit Residential (R2) Zone accessory to single detached dwellings. ~~This is to provide one additional dwelling unit subject to requirements designed to maintain the appearance of a single detached dwelling~~ and minimize impact on adjacent land uses and the surrounding neighbourhood.

Proposal

If the amendments are approved, the following styles of mini-homes would be permitted as an accessory dwelling unit



Prestige Homes
Manufactured Cottage (40' x 16')



Prestige Homes: Mini-Home (48' x 16')



Prestige Homes: Mini-Home (40' x 16')

Citizen Engagement

An advertisement outlining the amendments and indicating that it is under review by staff was placed in the *Chronicle Herald*

As part of the review process for Municipal Planning Strategy amendments, a Public Information Meeting (PIM) was required to hear input from the community. The PIM was held February 4, 2025. Comments included:

- Timelines for the amendments and when people could expect them to be effective
- Questions on whether the amendments apply across the Municipality or specific to a certain area
- Questions regarding the definition of a mini-home



Citizen Engagement

- A Public Hearing has been scheduled for March 26th 2025
- A notice of Public Hearing will appear in the March 12th and 19th editions of the Chronicle Herald. The notice was also posted on the Municipal website, and on social media.
- Staff are recommending that the amendments be approved

Recommendation

That Planning Advisory Committee recommends that Council give second reading and approve

Recommended Motion

- ***Planning Advisory Committee recommends that Council give Second Reading and approval to amend the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw to permit small mini-homes as accessory dwelling units***

