

Advisory Committee of Council Staff Report



To Accessibility Advisory Committee
Date Tuesday, August 20, 2024
Subject **Additional Residential Dwelling Unit Incentive Program – Potential Accessible Design Features**

Recommendation

1. That the Accessibility Advisory Committee receive the staff report titled “Additional Residential Dwelling Unit Incentive Program – Potential Accessible Design Features” dated August 20, 2024.
2. a) That the AAC receive the draft list of accessible design features, included in this report, as part of the Additional Residential Dwelling Unit Incentive Program
b) and recommend the following be included for consideration:

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

To provide an overview of work completed to date on developing an Additional Residential Dwelling Unit (or ARDU) Incentive Program and to engage the Accessibility Advisory Committee on a drafted list of recommended accessible design features to be included as part of an optional program component.

Key Findings

As part of the City’s Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan, City staff are exploring how to best implement an ARDU Incentive Program that will encourage the creation of more ARDUs by offering financial incentives. The goal of this ARDU Incentive Program is to incent the creation of 40 ARDUs by the end of 2026. As part of the program, City staff are interested in offering additional incentives if the unit includes certain accessible design features so that there is an increase in the accessible housing supply in the City of Guelph.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The ARDU Incentive Program aligns with the Future Guelph Strategic Plan theme of City Building and the objective of improving housing supply by creating a program that will provide financial incentives and assistance to applicants that want to build an ARDU but may lack the financial resources to do so. The City is also interested in supporting more accessible ARDU housing supply by providing additional incentives if accessible design features are included in the ARDU building permit application.

Future Guelph Theme

City Building

Future Guelph Objectives

City Building: Improve housing supply

Financial Implications

The creation of an ARDU Incentive Program is a key initiative of the City's Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan and will be funded through the monies received.

Majority of the work on this program is being conducted by City staff, with a small external consultant contract for conducting ARDU interviews.

Report

In January 2024, the City of Guelph received 21.4 million dollars from the Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation's Housing Accelerator Fund. As part of the City's Action Plan for the funding, the City has committed to a number of initiatives that overall, aim to incentivize the creation of 739 more housing units than the City's current average by the end of 2026. One of these initiatives is to implement an Additional Residential Dwelling Unit (or ARDU) Incentive Program to encourage the creation of more ARDUs by directly offering financial incentives. The City has committed to getting this program ready for applications by January 2025. The goal of this ARDU Incentive Program is to incent the creation of 40 ARDUs by the end of 2026.

ARDUs are dwelling units that are self-contained, subordinate to and found within the same building or on the same lot as the primary dwelling unit. These units can come in a variety of forms, including a detached, newly-constructed unit such as a garden suite, a detached converted space, such as a garage or shed, an addition on the primary dwelling unit, or converting an existing attached space, like a basement. At this time, staff are still exploring the amount of the incentive, the best method to provide the incentive, and other program criteria and no decisions have been made. As part of the feasibility phase of the project, staff have hired a consultant to interview local ARDU builders and homeowners to understand opportunities and constraints. Budget analysis on ARDU costs will also be completed to build an understanding of current construction costs to align the incentive appropriately.

While staff continue to work on the structure of the program, there is interest from City staff in offering additional incentives if certain accessible design features are included in the building permit application for the ARDU. These incentives would help to offset the cost of these accessible design features and to make achieving the accessible program criteria more attractive for potential applications. In turn, this can help to increase the number of accessible units in the City of Guelph. All applications to this program would still have to meet zoning and Ontario Building Code requirements.

This program, including the accessible design component, would be completely voluntary. Building Services staff cannot enforce barrier-free Code requirements for an ARDU. Building Services can inspect for these accessible design features during the inspection process but if some of the features are not completed, Building Services would not be able to fail the inspection or deny occupancy for items that are above and beyond Ontario Building Code requirements. However, the program may include provisions that the additional incentives offered may be at risk if these features are not included prior to occupancy.

To help inform the design of an ARDU Incentive Program for Guelph and to build this draft list of accessible design features, City staff have been reviewing programs offered by other municipalities as well as accessible design guidelines created by non-profits and upper levels of government. These programs and guidelines include the [City of Calgary Secondary Suite Incentive Program](#), the [Accessible by Design catalogue](#) from CMHC, the [Elements for Accessible Housing](#) from CSA Group, and the [Flex Housing Checklist](#) from CMHC.

City staff are seeking feedback and a motion of recommendation on the draft list of accessible design features included as Attachment-1, that would be included as part of the ARDU Incentive Program.

In terms of the next steps, City staff will work with Building Services staff to determine which of these features can be reviewed as part of the building permit application process and if further modifications to the list need to be made.

City staff will present final recommendations to the Accessibility Advisory Committee at the October 15, 2024 meeting. Staff will also be reviewing information and data from the interviews with local ARDU homeowners and builders and the technical budget analysis to balance the core needs of an accessible residential unit with current construction costs.

Financial Implications

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Consultations

Planning and Building Services staff,

Economic Development staff,

Finance staff,

Legal staff,

Interviews have also been conducted with local ARDU developers and homeowners.

Note: a document summarizing these consultations will be created.

Attachments

Attachment-1_Draft List of Accessible Design Features for the ARDU Incentive Program

Attachment-2_Presentation_ARDU Incentive Program, Potential Accessible Design Features

Departmental Approval

Krista Walkey, MCIP, RPP, General Manager, Planning and Building Services

Report Author

Lucas Mollame, Policy Planner II, Policy Planning

This report was approved by:

Krista Walkey, MCIP, RPP

General Manager, Planning and Building Services
Infrastructure, Development and Environment
519-822-1260 extension 2395
krista.walkey@guelph.ca