

CHAPTER 9

HOUSING POLICIES

The provision of adequate and *affordable* housing is an essential component of individual health and community vitality. Supporting a diverse range and mix of *housing option* to serve all sizes, incomes, and age of households is therefore an important goal of this Plan.

The Regional Official Plan has designated sufficient land within the boundaries of the Breslau and Stockyards Urban Areas and the Elmira and St. Jacobs Township Urban Areas to accommodate the vast majority of forecasted population and/or employment Regional growth to the year 2031. Although most the township's population anticipated growth will be accommodated in *designated greenfield areas* with the Breslau Urban Area and the Elmira and St. Jacobs Township Urban Area. The housing policies of this Plan apply equally to *delineated built-up areas* to support the achievement of *complete communities* and help the diversify the township's entire housing stock.

A limited amount of growth is expected within the Township's Countryside Settlement Areas. No significant additional land is required in these Countryside Settlement Areas to accommodate the Township's future growth. The Township will continue to provide housing that is associated with farming operations and recognizes the non-farm related housing/parcels that exist within the *Countryside* Land Use Area. However, the *Countryside* Land Use Area is protected primarily for food production and therefore the policy in this Plan prohibits the creation of new non-farm related lots for residential development.

9.1 GENERAL HOUSING POLICIES

- 9.1.1 The Township will maintain at all times the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 10 years through residential *reurbanization* and, if necessary, lands which are designated and available for residential *development*.
- 9.1.2 The Township will maintain at all times where *development* is to occur, land with servicing capacity sufficient to provide at least a three-year supply of residential units. This supply will include, and may exclusively consist of, lands suitably zoned for *reurbanization*, and land in draft approved and registered plans.
- 9.1.3 The Township will encourage a high level of repair and maintenance in the existing housing stock by taking advantage of Federal, Provincial, and Regional housing programs, adopting and implementing *Community Improvement Plans*, and by enforcing property standards by-laws.
- 9.1.4 Following the next *municipal comprehensive review* of the Regional Official Plan, the Township, in consultation with the Region and other appropriate stakeholders, will initiate an update to this Plan and the Zoning By-law as necessary to:

- a) Further increase housing choice in the township through the achievement of the minimum *reurbanization* and density targets in this Plan, as well as the other policies of this Plan by:
 - i) Identifying a diverse range and mix of *housing options* and densities, including second units and *affordable* housing to meet projected needs of current and future residents; and
 - ii) Establishing targets for *affordable* ownership and rental housing in the township;
- b) Identify mechanisms, including the use of land use planning and financial tools, to support the implementation of Section 9.1.4 a); and
- c) Align with the Region’s 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plans required under the Housing Services Act, specifically the Plan’s target that 30% of all new residential growth should be affordable across the Region.

- 9.1.5 Notwithstanding Sections 9.1.2 and 9.1.3, in implementing Section 9.1.4, the Township will support the achievement of *complete communities* by:
- a) Planning to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan;
 - b) Planning to achieve the minimum *reurbanization* and density targets in this Plan;
 - c) Considering the range and mix of *housing options* and densities of the existing housing stock; and
 - d) Planning to diversify their overall housing stock across the Township.

9.1.6 The Township Zoning By-law will be amended as necessary to implement the policies of this Chapter.

9.2 RANGE AND MIX OF HOUSING OPTIONS INCLUDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 9.2.1 The Township will provide for a diverse range and mix of *housing options*, including additional/accessory residential units as noted in e) ii) below and *affordable* housing, to serve all sizes, incomes, and age of households in the community by.
- a) Requiring, wherever appropriate, *development applications* proposing residential uses on sites containing two hectares or more of developable lands, to include a minimum of 30 percent of the dwelling units to be planned in forms other than single detached and semi-detached dwellings, such as townhomes and multi-unit residential units;
 - b) Encouraging innovative lot configurations, housing designs and construction techniques;
 - c) Providing opportunities for mixed-use developments in new and redeveloping residential areas;
 - d) Encouraging the construction of assisted housing, not-for-profit and *affordable* housing that is accessible/barrier free. For the purpose of providing *affordable* housing such factors to be considered are housing types (e.g., apartments, stacked townhouses, plexes), tenure (ownership and rental), size of units and number of bedrooms; and
 - e) Encouraging housing intensification in appropriate areas, including, but not limited to:

- i) Providing opportunities for *reurbanization* within the *delineated built-up area*, except where *infrastructure* is inadequate or there are significant physical constraints;
- ii) Permitting additional/accessory residential units, as-of-right in most residential zones, in a single detached house, semi-detached house or row townhouse, as well as a building ancillary to the after mentioned dwelling types if there is not a permitted mobile home or trailer located on site, all except where *infrastructure* is inadequate, required parking cannot be provided or there are significant physical constraints. The Zoning By-law will provide regulations, such as but are not limited to:
 - limit the number of additional residential units within the primary dwelling unit and/or ancillary building,
 - provide maximum floor area sizes,
 - provide minimum parking/access standards,
 - regulations to ensure that the unit(s) remain accessory to the primary dwelling unit,
 - not located within floodplain areas, and
 - shall be designed and developed appropriately;
- iii) Conversion of existing single-detached homes to multiple units, including the creation of apartments;
- iv) Conversion of industrial or commercial buildings, or portions thereof, into residential units *outside employment areas*;
- v) The creation of new lots/units through infilling outside the *Countryside Land Use Area*;
- vi) Addition of a “granny flat” on a property;
- vii) The creation of residential units above or towards the rear of commercial uses; and
- viii) Providing for doddy houses on farms within the *Countryside Land Use Area* where appropriate.
- f) Modifying existing zoning and servicing standards, to facilitate the provision of the *affordable* housing in new residential developments, where such modifications are consistent with the intent of this Plan and are in accordance with good planning, environmental and engineering practices;
- g) Subject to the staging policies of this Plan, fast-tracking the processing of *development applications* containing *affordable* housing;
- h) Encourage, where appropriate, density bonuses, property tax exemptions, and other incentives to support the creation of *affordable* housing and *special needs housing*;
- i) Requiring new residential plans of subdivision to include housing designs to include, or provide for the future installation of additional residential units;
- j) Working with the Region, the private sector and other stakeholders, the Township may consider innovative financial arrangements and/or other tools or mechanisms to encourage and support the development and maintenance of non-profit and *affordable* housing, such as:
 - i) Incentives provided through *Community Improvement Plans*;

- ii) Permissions for additional residential units;;
 - iii) Grants in lieu of development charges, municipal fees or property taxes or other grants; and
 - iv) Promoting higher density housing as well as housing units that are smaller and include more modest amenities, standards, materials, minimal details and flexibility within units;
 - v) Exempting *affordable* housing blocks from the staging polices of the respective Settlement Area as noted in Section 7.6.5 or allocating additional wastewater and/or growth capacity to a development that will provide a greater share of their housing mixed as being affordable.
- k) Collaborating with community partners participating in Regional, Provincial, or Federal programs to foster the provision of affordable housing;
 - l) Ensuring that municipal surplus lands, where appropriate, have been considered for affordable housing projects prior to their disposition or as a condition of their disposition; and
 - m) Utilizing the Demolition Control By-law, where appropriate, as a tool to preserve existing the residential housing stock from being converted or repurposed to other non-residential uses (e.g., parking lot).

9.2.2 The Township may pass by-laws authorizing garden suites (i.e., “granny flats”) as a temporary use for up to 20 years, to help provide *affordable* housing and enable older adults or adults with physical and mental challenges to live independently while receiving informal support from family members or a caregiver in an independent dwelling unit.

9.2.3 The Township, through an amendment to this Plan, will add inclusionary zoning polices pursuant to Section 16(4) of the Planning Act that are:

- a) authorizing the inclusion of *affordable* housing units within buildings or projects containing other residential units; and
- b) providing for the *affordable* housing units to be maintained as affordable housing units over time.

The inclusionary zoning policies shall establish an approach to authorizing inclusionary zoning and address matters contained in Section 3 of O. Reg. 232/18 in the Planning Act. Prior to amending this Plan to establish policies for inclusionary zoning, the Township shall complete an assessment report pursuant to Section 16(9) and Section 2 of O. Reg. 232/18 in the Planning Act.

9.3 ASSISTED AND SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

9.3.1 Assisted and *special needs housing* includes group homes, lodging houses, halfway houses, homes for special care, and all other types of residences licensed or funded under a Federal or Provincial statute for the accommodation of persons living under supervision in a single housekeeping unit and who, by reason of their emotional, mental, social or physical condition, require a group living arrangement for their well-being.

- 9.3.2 Assisted and *special needs housing* shall be permitted in all designations that permit residential uses especially areas with access to medical facilities, employment lands, social services, *human services*, other *special needs housing* and amenities, subject to the policies of this Plan, the provisions of the Zoning By-law and the satisfaction of the following criteria:
- a) The Ontario Building Code, as well as all applicable health and safety requirements, can be satisfied;
 - b) Any changes to a building resulting from the conversion to assisted or *special needs housing* shall be in keeping with the physical form and character of the surrounding neighbourhood;
 - c) Municipal property maintenance standards and all other relevant municipal regulations and standards shall apply to the Assisted or *special needs housing*; and
 - d) Assisted or *special needs housing* operators shall obtain a Certificate of Occupancy in accordance with the requirements of the applicable authority.
- 9.3.3 Proposed residential *development* in the Breslau Urban Area, and the Elmira and St. Jacobs Township Urban Areas will be encouraged to include a portion of ownership and rental dwellings that provide barrier-free access to people with mobility limitations.
- 9.3.4 The Township Zoning By-law shall not distinguish between the users of *special needs housing* on the basis of personal characteristics.

9.4 CONDOMINIUM CONVERSION

- 9.4.1 A *development application* to create a plan of condominium, which would result in the conversion of rental housing to condominium ownership, may only be permitted where:
- a) The rental vacancy rate for comparable units for the Township, or where data is available for the applicable settlement area, has been at or above three percent for the preceding years;
 - b) The conversion will address and result in the creation of *affordable* ownership housing;
 - c) The conversion will rectify existing health and safety issues through the completion of building renovations/retrofits, the cost of which would necessitate an increase in rent levels above the affordability threshold; and
 - d) The applicant submits a detailed inspection report on the physical condition of the property by a qualified architect or engineer to the satisfaction of the Township and the Region.

9.5 HOUSING POLICIES - COUNTRYSIDE AREA

- 9.5.1 The housing in areas designated *Countryside* Land Use by this Plan will be primarily limited to farm-related residential units and such housing shall be primarily one-family detached dwellings used as the primary residence for an active and operating farmer.

- 9.5.2 Additional permanent or temporary *farm-related residential units* may be permitted on a farm without severance to accommodate full-time farm employees, including members of the farm household directly involved in the farm operation, provided that:
- a) The size, nature and productive capability of the farm operation warrant additional farm employment for extended periods of time such that additional on-site accommodation is considered necessary;
 - b) Any new permanent dwellings will be limited to bunkhouses or the conversion and/or expansion of *existing farm-related residential units*;
 - c) Any new temporary dwellings, generally being a trailer or mobile home (but not a modular home) will be located near existing farm buildings and will be removed if they are no longer required to accommodate farm employees; and
 - d) The site can be appropriately serviced by private wells and individual wastewater treatment systems.
- 9.5.3 Additional residential units may be permitted in accordance with Section 9.2.1 e) ii, and/or in the form of a mobile homes and/or in the form of a “Doddy House”. For the purpose of this Section, a “Doddy House” is an integrated expansion of the existing single detached dwelling to create an additional unit that may have separate entrances and no internal connection, but such expansion to the existing single detached dwelling does not take the appearance of a semi-detached building. The Zoning By-law shall include appropriate regulations to address such matters as design, size, location and servicing for the provision of a mobile home and “Doddy House”.

9.6 HOUSING POLICIES – COUNTRYSIDE SETTLEMENTS

The township’s Countryside Settlements are relatively small concentrations of predominantly rural non-farm related single-detached dwellings on large lots at low density. It is not anticipated that these Settlements will be serviced by *municipal wastewater systems* unless such servicing currently exists. Water supply will generally be provided through private wells or existing communal water services, although municipal water systems may be required in the case of some new residential subdivisions.

- 9.6.1 Housing units will be limited primarily to single detached dwellings, semi-detached and duplex residential units on individual lots.
- 9.6.2 The Zoning By-law, where appropriate, may provide for a limited number of semi-detached or duplex dwellings or a single detached dwelling with a second unit. Multiple unit buildings, being buildings containing more than two dwelling units, may be considered where servicing is adequate, to provide rental accommodation or to provide for the housing needs of the residents.

- 9.6.3 It is intended that multiple unit dwellings will be allowed within Countryside Settlements only by means of a site-specific amendment to the Zoning By-law. Notwithstanding this Section, permitted permanent housing in Mundil, Weber, and Crowsfoot Corners Settlements shall be limited to single detached and duplex residential units. For the purposes of this Section, a single-detached dwelling with an apartment is not the same as a duplex residential unit.
- 9.6.4 Additional residential units may be permitted in accordance with Section 9.2.1 e) ii.

9.7 HOUSING POLICIES – URBAN / TOWNSHIP URBAN AREAS

Township Urban Areas and Urban Areas as defined in Chapter 7 of this Plan contemplate a broad range of residential uses as well as commercial, institutional, recreational and industrial uses. Such settlements are planned to be operated by municipally operated sewage collection and treatment facility.

- 9.7.1 This Plan clearly establishes the intent and desire of the municipality to control and regulate the rate of growth in Township Urban Areas and Urban Areas. Within the limitations imposed by the growth staging policies adopted, various forms of housing shall be considered to provide for the housing needs of the municipality. Within those Settlements which are served by a municipality operated sewage treatment plant, provision of new housing may be staged to reflect the desire of the municipality to control the rate of growth so as not to utilize the total sewage treatment plant capacity in the short term, and to address other growth-related issues to ensure the appropriate *development* of the community.
- 9.7.2 In order to assure an adequate supply of housing to meet the needs of the residents of the Planning Area, the municipality may consider any or all of the following:
- a) Participation in housing programs originated by the Regional, Provincial and Federal governments where such action is deemed appropriate;
 - b) Participation with senior government levels in housing renewal and rehabilitation programs where such action is deemed appropriate;
 - c) Co-operation with other municipalities and the Region in co-ordinating housing programs within the Region in order to standardize and co-ordinate procedures and policies;
 - d) Co-operation where required to encourage the construction and operation of subsidized housing units where deemed appropriate;
 - e) Staging of future *development* so that, insofar as possible, a supply of approved lots is available to meet the growth needs in the various categories of housing;
 - f) Consideration of permitting prefabricated and/or portable manufactured housing units, which meet the requirements of the Building Code in areas where such housing is deemed, appropriate;
 - g) Amending the Zoning By-law as may be required to encourage a mix of *housing options* to meet the needs of the residents as per Section 9.2;

- h) Encouraging where possible and appropriate, lower cost lots and housing to meet the needs of Township residents;
- i) Consideration where appropriate of the conversion of existing large single-detached residences for two or more dwelling units, subject to the appropriate servicing;
- j) Maintain a Minimum Maintenance and Occupancy By-law for such part or parts of the municipality where such control is deemed desirable;
- k) Where practical, processing Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments and Subdivision recommendations as a package and forwarding them to the Region all at one time;
- l) Encouraging the construction and maintenance of a sufficient number of rental units, including additional residential units (additional units within single, semi, and row housing), to meet the needs of the residents;
- m) Giving special consideration for the needs of accommodation for retirement housing, convalescent and nursing homes, homes for the physically and mentally challenged;
- n) Establishing through zoning, Settlement Plans, subdivision recommendations and Subdivider's agreements, a staging program aimed at assuring a sufficient number of lots to meet future housing demand;
- o) Establishing subdivision recommendations and Subdivider's agreements to include dwellings designs to allow for the creation of additional residential units along with the associated parking as per Section 9.2.1 e) ii; and
- p) To provide a range of planning and regulatory incentives that encourage affordable housing, such incentives may include:
 - i) Fast-tracking *development applications* that contain an *affordable housing* component;
 - ii) Density bonusing;
 - iii) Collaborating with community partners participating in Regional, Provincial, or Federal programs to foster the provision of affordable housing; and
 - iv) Providing financial relief in the form of Development Charge exemptions or deferrals for *affordable housing* projects.

9.8 BED AND BREAKFAST OPERATIONS

Bed and breakfast operations will be permitted within the *Countryside* Land Use designation and in settlements areas, within the “principal” single- detached dwelling, provided the character of the dwelling is not substantially altered and all compatibility, safety and servicing requirements are met including the provision of adequate parking. The Zoning By-law shall define a bed and breakfast operation use as distinct from a guesthouse and establish regulations addressing their establishment and operation.

9.9 HOME OCCUPATION

The Township will permit small scale business within certain residential dwellings or allow the resident to work at home (i.e., “home occupation”) provided that such business or occupation is small scale, does not generate significant activity to the property and is compatible with the surrounding residential neighbourhood. The Zoning By-law shall define a home occupation and provide regulations addressing their establishment and operation.