

# Guide to Accessory Dwelling Units

## Pre-Approved Building Plans - Coming Soon!

The Municipality will soon have pre-approved building plans for a two-bedroom, one-bedroom and studio accessory dwelling unit (ADU), making it easier for homeowners to build a detached unit on their property.

An ADU is a self-contained, detached dwelling that is an accessory to the principal dwelling unit on the same property. ADUs are self-contained suites that have cooking, living, sleeping and washroom facilities.

If you're building an accessory dwelling on your property, you can choose to build one of our pre-approved models and use those plans for your building project. A site plan is still required as part of the application.

Using pre-approved plans can save time and costs associated with drawing custom plans. The Municipality will also expedite the review of your application. You are still responsible for all building costs and should work with licensed contractors.

## Planning Your Project

### Develop your Building Plans

Consider the distance you'll want to maintain between the dwelling and the ADU and the minimum required distance from property lines, known as the setbacks. Try to imagine the building in your backyard to give you an idea of the available space for development. Consider the interior spaces and needs, such as number of bedrooms, dining room area, closet and extra storage space, washer and dryer and how they will fit into the space.

Plans should include cross-section detail, elevation drawings of all sides of the building and a floor plan.

### Prepare Your Site Plan

A detailed site plan will be required to determine whether the accessory dwelling will fit on your property. Your site plan must include the lot boundaries, the primary house, any other buildings on the property, and the driveway.

### Other Considerations

Determine whether the ADU will share water and sewer connections with the primary house or have separate connections. For central water and sewer areas, the authority having jurisdiction may have specific requirements for servicing.

The road authority has jurisdiction over driveway access. Their approval will be required as part of the building and development permit process. Adequate on-site parking must be provided to avoid conflict within the road right-of-way. Fire department access should also be contemplated in your site layout.

You will require an electrical connection and possibly telecommunications services for the ADU. Determine the feasibility and requirements of the utility to mitigate any unforeseen challenges.

With the new development, the assessed value of your property will change and as a result your property tax bill will increase. Additional fees which are included in your tax bill, such as a sewer rate, may also increase because of the additional residential unit.

## Submitting Your Permit Application

You need to apply for a building and development permit to build an accessory dwelling on your property. Your permit application must include:

- Building Plans
- Site Plan
- Driveway Approval from the Road Authority
- Sewer Approval from the applicable Authority

## Permit Fees and Charges

Total permit fees depend on the size of the dwelling you're building. They will be calculated once your application is received. To find out how much your building permit may cost, refer to the [fees policy](#).

In addition to the building and development permit fees, a sewer connection fee will apply if the unit is connecting to the Municipality's sewer system. A refundable deposit for driveway installation or alteration to the surface of the street will apply if the property fronts on a Municipal Road.

## Permit Approval

Once the site plan is reviewed and approved, sewer and driveway approvals are received and all fees are paid, we'll issue a footing permit for construction to begin. Once footings are placed, you are required to submit a location certificate from a NS Land Surveyor. Once the footings are inspected and approved and the location certificate is approved, a building permit will be issued to allow construction to continue through to occupancy.

## New Address

New civic numbers are assigned during the footing/building permit process. Once a building permit is issued, the civic number is assigned, and the property owner is notified. The assigned civic number must be posted on the unit to obtain occupancy approval.

## Contact Us

If you have questions about a development idea, call 902-690-6152 or email [inspections@countyofkings.ca](mailto:inspections@countyofkings.ca) to connect with development and building staff.