

Request for Decision



To: Committee of the Whole

From: **Development, Engineering and Planning**

Date: **August 12, 2019**

Subject: **Strategies to Increase Affordable and Attainable Housing Options in Grand Forks (FILE: 4710-01)**

Recommendation: **THAT the Committee of the Whole receive this report for information and forward it to the Regular Council meeting of August 12, 2019, for consideration;**

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to delegate the issuance of Development Permits for Garden Suites to City Staff; and FURTHER,

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to direct staff to:

- 1) Obtain servicing and development costs, undertake financial and feasibility analyses and report back to Council on the potential City-initiated housing projects outlined in this report (and listed in Appendix "A");**
- 2) Move forward with advertising and communications to heighten awareness in the community about secondary and garden suites, tiny homes and infill housing opportunities; and**
- 3) Waive the development and building permit fees for garden and secondary suites in the City.**

Background

On July 15th, 2019, Council considered and approved a report respecting policy objectives, process and the provision of "in-kind" housing support for property owners involved in the impending flood plain buy-out. A major policy direction of this initiative is to identify and facilitate the provision of affordable and attainable housing options for households affected by the buy-out.

The purpose of this report is to provide further detail about housing options and to seek Council's approval for several housing strategies to move forward immediately.

Housing Initiatives and Strategies

Housing options and the associated strategies to facilitate the availability of housing for flood impacted households are described below and are summarized in Appendix "B".

Rental Housing Development

- 1) 19th Street BC Housing Project (owned by BC Housing and operated by Boundary Family Services Society)
 - This project consists of 42 apartments and 10 townhouses estimated for occupancy by the end of the year.
 - BC Housing has indicated that priority placement will be given to flood impacted households and individuals based on immediacy of need.
- 2) Secondary and Garden Suites on Existing Properties
 - In 2018, the Zoning Bylaw was changed to allow suites within houses (i.e., a basement suite) and detached garden suites (with a development permit). The intent of this was to increase the rental stock in the City.
 - Secondary suites require only a building permit. Garden Suites require a development permit as stipulated in the Official Community Plan. The purpose of the development permit is to ensure that the smaller dwelling fits in with the neighbourhood.
 - To date, no applications have been received for garden suites although there have been numerous inquiries. This may be because (among other things such as cost) residents are unaware that garden suites are allowed in the City.
 - To heighten awareness in the community that these rental units are allowed, it is proposed that this message be communicated to property owners through advertising and brochures (see draft Garden Suite brochure in Appendix “C”).
 - To make it easier for homeowners to build a secondary or garden suite, staff is proposing that the permit process be simplified and that a small financial incentive be introduced to encourage more rental units on private property.
 - It is proposed that the issuance of development permits for garden suites be delegated to City staff and that the development permit and building permit fees be waived. This could potentially save an applicant about \$1,000.
 - Staff will also further investigate City incentives for rental unit development using a revitalization tax exemption bylaw (based on preliminary research, this tool is yet unproven for this purpose).
- 3) Tiny Houses
 - In early 2018, the OCP and Zoning Bylaw were changed to allow tiny houses on wheels in the City subject to the issuance of a temporary use permit.
 - This housing option provides a rental opportunity as an accessory dwelling or as an affordable ownership option on privately owned or leased land (temporary use permits are issued for three years, renewable for an additional three).
 - To date one tiny house on wheels has been approved (in the flood plain in Johnson Flats).
 - To heighten awareness in the community that tiny houses on wheels are allowed with a temporary use permit, it is proposed that this message be communicated to property owners through advertising and brochures (see draft Tiny Houses on Wheels brochure in Appendix “D”).

City-owned Lots – Long Term Lease Option

Some flood impacted households may be interested in moving an existing, pre-fabricated or build a new dwelling on City-owned land and enter into a long term lease in order to maintain affordability but allow for ownership and future sale of improvements (i.e., a moved house, manufactured home, modular home).

Offering these leased lots must provide a long term sound investment for the City which means the costs to service the lots and the forgone taxes must be repaid through lease rates.

City staff will consult with local banks as to the mortgage requirements and recommended terms for leased lots to enable lessees to qualify for mortgages if applicable.

Some potential locations (see Appendix “A”) for long term leased lots in the City are:

- +/- 20 lots on 24A Street south of 68th Avenue (existing small lots in the ALR);
- 8 - 10 lots on a portion of the 5-acre Lot 3 on 72nd Avenue (beside Silver Kettle); and,
- Undetermined number of lots on a portion (location to be determined) of Parcel Z on the west end of 68th Avenue.

City staff will determine the costs of servicing and developing these lots as a basis for establishing lease rates.

City staff is working with the Agricultural Land Commission to confirm that the +/- 20 lots on 24A Street (south of Angus MacDonald Park) can be made available if they are feasible to service.

All of these potential housing projects will require subdivision and servicing plans and approvals. Most of the costs of the feasibility studies for this initiative can be covered through the West End Infrastructure Servicing Strategy, which is currently in process. Costs over and above the West End Study are anticipated to be covered by the Department’s 2019 consulting budget.

City-owned Lots – Purchase Option

Many of the flood impacted households wish to secure full ownership of a property but can do so only with some in-kind assistance. In this case, City-owned lots could be offered for sale or potentially through a land trade, at market value. Because there are no readily serviced lots in the City, nor a current budget to service any, the servicing costs to make lots market-ready must be recovered over time through a

mechanism such as a local service tax (parcel tax)¹. It is noted that smaller lot size would be favoured to more efficiently service the lots and maintain affordability.

There may also be an option involving partial ownership of a lot by the City (i.e., equity financing of a portion of property value to be recouped on future sale of property) to reduce up-front costs for the purchasers. City staff will explore this option more thoroughly to determine its viability.

Although it may be possible to pursue creating fee simple lots on the above city-owned properties (with rezoning) rather than lots for lease, the city-owned land on 71nd Avenue/Donaldson Drive/13th Street may be appropriate for fee simple ownership.

City staff will determine the costs of servicing and developing these lots as a basis for establishing the market/purchase price.

Partnership-based Townhouse or Condominium Projects on City-owned Land

There may be city-owned property available for third party development in a strata-type format. Using City-owned land could potentially pass savings in land value on to owners with an affordability contract in place with a developer.

There may also be opportunities for cooperative housing ventures instead of conventional developer ownership and financing.

Lot 1, 7850 2nd Street, at the north end of 2nd Street (currently a Licence of Occupation for a church) may be a lot suited to this option. City staff will explore this option in more detail and develop a strategy to entice the development community to partner with the City to accomplish affordable townhouse or condo units in the City.

Conclusion

The intent of the strategies contained in this report is to facilitate the creation of approximately 80 lots/units to replace the 80 lots scheduled for buy-out, and therefore maintain a reasonable inventory of single family lots and other housing units in the City.

Households receiving buy-outs will have varying needs and abilities to replace the home and lifestyle they had in the flood plain areas. Increasing the rental housing stock in the City along with developing city-owned lands for residential purposes may help these households more easily attain new places to live.

¹ On July 15th, 2019, City Council approved a policy respecting sound investment: planning, development and servicing investments must provide a long-term benefit for the City or leverage additional development; and lifecycle costs are to be paid for over the life of development through taxes, lease income, servicing fees and utility fees.

Decisions to proceed with creating new lots on city-owned land must be sound investments on behalf of the public, be based upon equity and fairness for all residents/taxpayers in the City and must be easily administered within the City's existing capacity to manage its public assets.

Benefits or Impacts



Community Engagement

- A series of meetings with those affected by the impending buy-out were held to generally discuss the options identified in this report (the results of these meeting will be transmitted to Council under separate cover).



Community Livability

- The location of new lots will take into consideration amenities available and proximity to schools, shopping and recreation.



Economic Growth

- The strategies presented are intended to foster new residential development and provide attainable housing for flood impacted households, allowing them to stay in Grand Forks and contribute to the economy.



Fiscal Responsibility

- The cost implications of waiving the development and building permit fees for secondary and garden suites maybe offset by the increase in taxes received from the secondary dwelling.
- There are substantial costs associated with creating and servicing new lots in the City. In accordance with Council approved policy, a specific housing project will not be deemed feasible if there is no mechanism available to recoup the costs (plus) over time through surcharges, fees or parcel taxes (i.e., if it is not a sound investment on behalf of the taxpaying public).

Policy/Legislation

The Local Government Act, the Community Charter, the Official Community Plan, the Zoning Bylaw and the City of Grand Forks Real Estate Strategy Policy.

Attachments

Appendix "A": List and Map of Potential City-Initiated Housing Projects on City-Owned Land

Appendix "B": Summary of Strategies to Increase Housing Options for Property Owners Scheduled for a Buy-out

Appendix "C": DRAFT Garden Suite Guide

Appendix "D": DRAFT Tiny House (on wheels) Guide

Recommendation

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THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to delegate the issuance of Development Permits for Garden Suites to City Staff; and FURTHER,

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to direct staff to:

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- 2) Move forward with advertising and communications to heighten awareness in the community about secondary and garden suites, tiny homes and infill housing opportunities; and**
- 3) Waive the development and building permit fees for garden and secondary suites in the City.**

Options

1. THAT the Committee of the Whole accepts the report.
2. THAT the Committee of the Whole does not accept the report.
3. THAT the Committee of the Whole refers the matter back to staff for further information.

Appendix “A”
List of Potential City-Initiated Housing Projects on City-Owned Land
(see map attached)

Potential Housing Project	Est. No. of Units	Size/Type of Units	Comments
Portion of Lot 3, 72nd Avenue beside Silver Kettle	8 – 10	Single family lots Multiple family potential with partnership	Approx. 2 acres are on short term reserve for a seniors apartment project. Zoned CU – Community Use which only allows partnership for development. Lots limited to long term lease.
24A Street, Block 19 south of Angus Macdonald Park	+/- 20	Small single family lots	Existing small lots in the ALR. Zoned CU. Proposal under review by the Agricultural Land Commission.
Portion of Parcel Z (south of Extra Foods)	undetermined	undetermined	If existing lots on 24A St are serviced, creating lots or strata units here may be feasible.
71 st Street & Donaldson Drive, City-owned (beside the Grand Trail)	8 - 12	Small single family lots	Properties must be replotted into a feasible lot configuration, but servicing is nearby.
Lot 1, 7850 2 nd Street, at the north end of 2 nd Street (currently a Licence of Occupation for a church)	2.5 acres	Suitable for multiple family units only (due to site constraints)	Potential for a city partnership (long term).

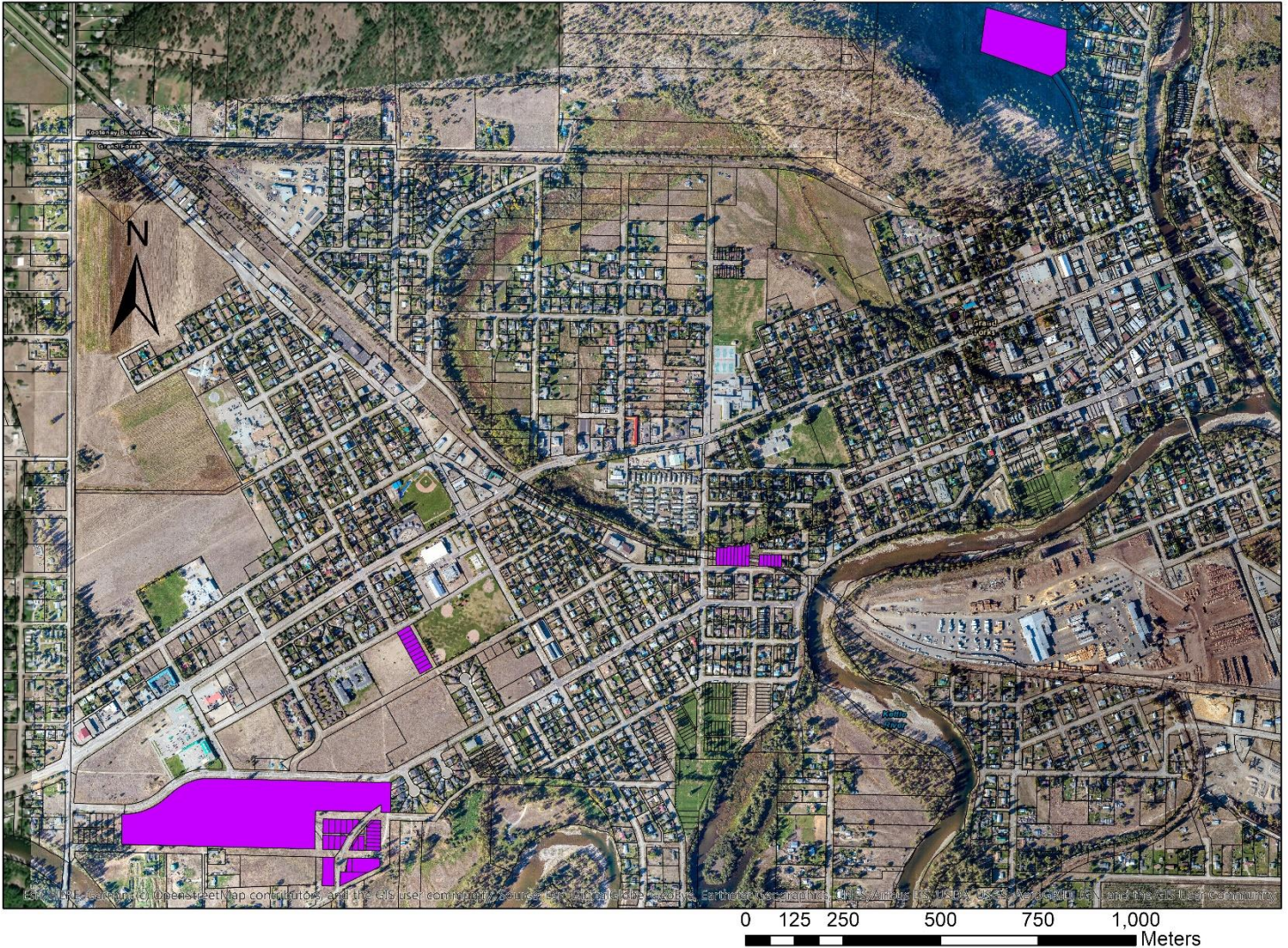
Municipal Parcels with Development Potential

Created by: Travis Arnold

Date: August 2, 2019

Datum: NAD 83 UTM Zone 11N

Data Source: City of Grand Forks



Appendix “B”
Summary of Strategies to Increase Housing Options for Property Owners
Scheduled for a Buy-out

Strategy 1: For the BC Housing project on 19th Street, give priority to flood impacted households and individuals based on immediacy of need.

Strategy 2: Delegate the issuance of development permits for garden suites to City staff.

Strategy 3: Waive the development permit and building permit fees for garden suites and secondary suites.

Strategy 4: Implement a communication strategy advising residents that secondary suites, garden suites and tiny houses are allowed in Grand Forks.

Strategy 5: Implement a communication strategy advising residents that tiny homes on wheels are allowed in Grand Forks subject to a temporary use permit.

Strategy 6: Consult with local banks to work out lease rates and terms that will enable flood impacted households to secure mortgages on leased lots at a reasonable cost while ensuring that the value of the asset for existing taxpayers is maintained.

Strategy 7: Engage a consultant to determine the costs of servicing and developing the city-owned properties identified in this report as a basis for establishing lease rates, funding mechanisms and purchase prices.

Strategy 8: Confirm with the Agricultural Land Commission that the +/- 20 lots on 24A Street (south of Angus MacDonald Park) can be made available if they are feasible to service.

Strategy 9: Determine the viability of the City retaining ownership of a fraction of a market lot to potentially reduce the up-front costs for purchasers of city-owned lots.

Strategy 10: Develop a strategy to entice the development community to partner with the City to develop affordable townhouse or condo units in the City.

Appendix “C”
D R A F T Garden Suite Brochure



A Guide to Garden Suites

Garden Suites are allowed in Grand Forks!

In 2018, following public consultation and a public hearing, Grand Forks City Council decided to make it easier for homeowners to build a garden suite (also known as a laneway house or carriage house) on their property.

What is a Garden Suite?

A garden suite is a separate smaller home, typically located in your backyard or above a garage and detached from the main dwelling. Garden suites are designed to be long-term rental housing; they cannot be strata titled or sold. They also require a development permit to make sure they fit into the neighbourhood and a building permit to ensure they are safe and livable.

Property owners may build a new garden suite alone or on a garage or convert an existing accessory building if it meets the BC Building Code.

Why are Garden Suites good for Grand Forks?

Garden suites use existing infrastructure, providing a sustainable and economical way to increase and diversify the rental housing stock. They provide housing for a variety of people, including those who would like to downsize, relatives of homeowners, aging parents and renters who would like a detached dwelling rather than a condo or basement suite. Rental income also helps to reduce housing costs for homeowners. Garden Suites must adhere to a set of design guidelines to ensure that they will fit with the existing streetscape and atmosphere of the neighbourhood.

Where are Garden Suites permitted?

Garden Suites are permitted in the two main residential zones (R1 and R2) in Grand Forks, and in the Neighbourhood Commercial (NC) and Tourist Commercial (TC) zones. The Grand Forks Zoning Bylaw indicates that in the R1 and R2 residential zones, the following dwelling units are permitted: (a) one single family dwelling, plus (b) one secondary suite and one garden suite; or (c) one two-family dwelling, plus (d) one garden suite.

To find out if the zoning on your property allows a garden suite, contact City staff at 250-442-8246 or info@grandforks.ca, or view the Grand forks Zoning Map on our website.

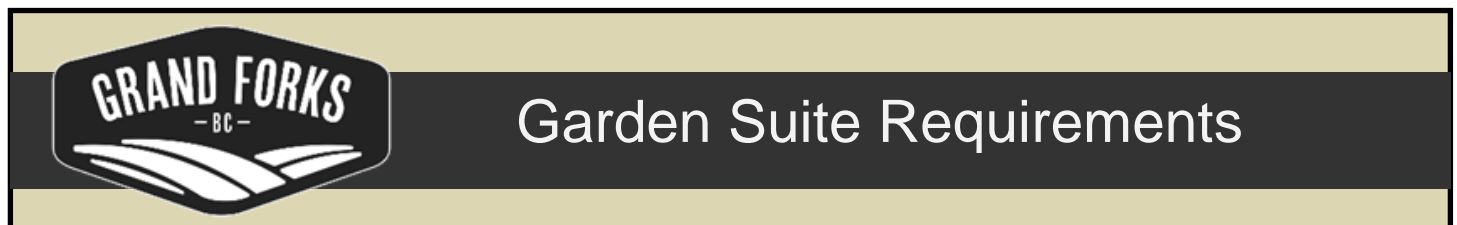
Your garden suite must also meet the requirements of the Zoning Bylaw (Section 22), and the Development Permit Area Guidelines prescribed in the Official Community Plan (Section 14.10). These requirements are summarized below.

I want to build a Garden Suite. What do I need to do?

- 1) Check to see if your property is eligible for a garden suite.
- 2) Review the regulations and guidelines for garden suites.
- 3) Contact City staff to discuss your plans and the requirements for your application: 250-442-8246 or info@grandforks.ca.
- 4) Prepare your plans and apply for a Development Permit which includes a questionnaire to ensure your proposal meets the guidelines for garden suites. When you are ready, contact City staff to book an appointment to submit your application.
- 5) Once approved, apply for the necessary building permits.
- 6) When all permits are in hand, you are ready to build.

What will it cost to get my Garden Suite approved?

Permit or Service	Cost
Development Permit application	\$200 (under review)
Building Permit (approximate)	\$8 per \$1,000 of declared or assessed value + \$10 per plumbing fixture (under review)
Sewer	Shared with main house (additional usage)
Water	Shared with main house (additional usage)
Electric & gas	Shared with main house (additional usage)



Once you have confirmed that a garden suite is allowed on your property, the suite must be sited and designed according to the following regulations and guidelines.

Zoning Regulations

In addition to the zoning requirements regarding setbacks, height and lot coverage in the applicable zone, garden suites must comply with the following regulations (as per Section 22 of the Zoning Bylaw):

1. A minimum floor area of 12 sq. m. and a maximum floor area of 90 sq. m.

2. Must satisfy all the requirements of the British Columbia Building Code and other associated bylaws and regulations.
3. If a Garden Suite does not have direct access to a highway on an exterior side or rear parcel line, it shall have private or emergency access via an unobstructed pathway constructed and maintained between the public street and the Garden Suite entrance, with a minimum width of 1 m.
4. Must be sited on a permanent foundation.
5. A Garden Suite cannot be strata titled.

Development Permit Area Guidelines

Garden suites must comply with Section 14.10 of the Official Community Plan: "Accessory Dwelling Unit and Tiny House Development Permit Area (ADU DPA)". These guidelines are as follows:

Buildings and Structures

1. Orient buildings to maximize opportunities for passive solar heating and natural lighting.
2. Consider adaptable design and universal accessibility.
3. Use natural ventilation and cooling systems.
4. Consider the use of green roof systems to reduce storm water runoff, reduce energy costs and improve visual appearance.
5. Use building products that demonstrate re-use, upcycling and green technology.
6. Developments are encouraged to seek Passive House, LEED, or other sustainability certification.
7. Where garages or carports are necessary, design them to be recessed within the building or set back from the front face of the building.
8. Buildings should be clad with durable, aesthetically acceptable and environmentally friendly materials at least as good of quality as primary dwelling; vinyl and aluminum siding are not acceptable.

Utilities / Servicing

9. Buildings must share the services of the primary unit as per the City Bylaws for water, sewer, electrical services.

Parking / Access

10. Entrances should face the street (or laneway, if sited on a lane) and have direct pedestrian access from the street. Windows should provide "eyes on the lane" for security.
11. Shared driveways are encouraged to reduce paved surfaces.
12. Provide vehicle access via rear lanes where they are available.

Screening and Landscaping

13. Provide private outdoor space of at least 9 square metres for each of the primary residence and accessory dwelling unit.
14. Provide for clothesline use.
15. Limit the use of potable water for landscape irrigation.

16. Provide natural filtration of rainwater into the site through techniques including raingardens, rainwater collection systems, bio-swales and permeable paving or crushed rock for driveways.



What is the process to develop a garden suite?

1. Pre-application meeting

Contact City staff to discuss your ideas and preliminary plans for your garden suite. Note that you will be required to apply for both a Development Permit and a Building Permit. City staff will help to define the next steps in the process. Although the City will notify neighbouring properties about your development permit application after you apply, it is suggested that you discuss your proposal with your neighbours to gain their support.

2. Apply for a Development Permit

Make an appointment with City staff to submit your application. A Development Permit Application must be accompanied by drawings/plans, including:

- 1) A legible site plan, drawn to scale, showing the following:
 - a) The boundaries and dimensions of the subject property,
 - b) The location, setbacks and dimensions of the proposed and existing buildings,
 - c) The location of off-street parking, and
 - d) The location of roads, lanes, pedestrian access routes, screening, landscaping and fencing.
- 2) Photos or elevation plans showing height, exterior finishing and colour, windows and doors, roof pitch, etc.

3. Plan Check and Referral

The application will be checked by City staff to ensure that it is complete and that the proposed garden suite conforms to City requirements. Staff may also refer the application to the Fire and Public Works Departments for review.

4. Neighbours are Notified of the Proposal for a Garden Suite

All landowners within 30 metres (100 ft) of your property will be notified in writing of your application. It is advisable to consult with your neighbours in advance to gain support for your garden suite proposal.

6. Development Permit is Issued

City staff will then issue a development permit (with or without conditions). This permit will be sent to the Land Titles Office and registered on the title of your property.

7. Apply for a Building Permit

Once your Development Permit is issued, you may apply for a Building Permit. In most cases a building permit and development permit application may be reviewed by City staff concurrently.

Appendix “D”
D R A F T Tiny House on Wheels Brochure



A Guide to Tiny Houses in Grand Forks

Tiny Houses on Wheels are allowed in Grand Forks!

In 2018, following public consultation and a public hearing, Grand Forks City Council adopted an amendment to the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw to accommodate *tiny houses on wheels* in the City. Before placing a tiny house on property in the City, a Temporary Use Permit must be obtained to ensure that the tiny house fits in with the neighbourhood and is safe and livable.

What is a Tiny House on Wheels?

A *tiny house on wheels* is a dwelling unit on a wheeled chassis, greater than 12 square metres (129 square feet) and less than 29 square metres (312 square feet). A tiny house in Grand Forks must be constructed to be used as a full-time residence in this climate and must comply with the current British Columbia Building Code. If premanufactured, the tiny house must comply with the CSA Z240 or Z240RV standard.

Tiny houses can be either a second smaller home on a lot (accessory dwelling unit), or in some cases, be the only home on a lot. Both options require the landowner to apply for and obtain permits from City Council.

Why are Tiny Houses good for Grand Forks?

Tiny houses provide an alternative housing solution for a variety of people, including those who would like to downsize, relatives of homeowners, aging parents and renters. Rental income can help to reduce housing costs for homeowners (i.e., mortgage helpers), and increase options for affordable rental housing in the City. Tiny houses use very little city infrastructure, providing a sustainable and economical way to increase and diversify the housing stock in the city.

Where are Tiny Houses on Wheels permitted?

Tiny houses on wheels are permitted outright in industrial zones in Grand Forks. In all other zones (i.e., residential) they must receive approval through a permit process (Temporary Use Permit). This process involves an application and review process, public notification and consideration by City Council.

Before buying or building a tiny house, please contact City staff at 250-442-8246 or info@grandforks.ca to learn about the process and requirements for placing a tiny house on your property.

I want to place a Tiny House on Wheels on my lot. What do I need to do?

1. Review the regulations and guidelines for tiny houses on wheels in the Zoning Bylaw and the Official Community Plan.
2. If you are planning to place a tiny house on a residential property, you must apply for a temporary use permit. Before you proceed, contact city staff to discuss the application requirements (250-442-8266 or info@grandforks.ca).
3. Prepare your plans and apply for a [Temporary Land Use Permit](#) to ensure your application meets the guidelines for tiny houses in Grand Forks. When you are ready, contact City staff to book an appointment to submit your application.
4. Your application will be forwarded to City Council for authorization to proceed to public notification, which includes advertising in the local paper and notifying neighbouring property owners.
5. Your application will proceed to Council for a second time where, based on any comments received by the public, Council will approve (or deny) the permit.
6. The permit will be issued and be valid for a period of three years. A renewal for an additional three years can be applied for prior to the expiry date of the original permit.
7. You may apply for a building permit.
8. When all permits are in hand, you are ready to build or place the tiny house on your land.



Tiny House Requirements

Once you have confirmed that a tiny house on wheels is suitable for your property, it must be sited and designed in accordance with the following regulations and guidelines.

Zoning Regulations

In addition to the zoning requirements regarding setbacks, height and lot coverage in the applicable zone, *tiny houses on wheels* must comply with the following regulations (as per Section 23 of the Zoning Bylaw):

- 1) A tiny house on wheels must be constructed to be used as a full-time residence according to the current British Columbia Building Code or the CSA Z240 or Z240RV standard if it is premanufactured.
- 2) For residential zones permitting a single-family dwelling with a floor area between 18 and 29 square metres or a garden suite, the tiny house on wheels must be converted to a single-family dwelling or a garden suite by placement on a full-depth perimeter or point support foundation, subject to the conditions of a building permit from the City.
- 3) A person must obtain a temporary use permit to place a *tiny house on wheels* that is not converted to a principal dwelling or garden suite in a zone where it is not permitted, such that:
 - (a) bonding sufficient for removal of the tiny house on wheels is provided to the City before the time of placement; and
 - (b) the tiny house on wheels is removed at the end of the permit period; or
 - (a) to remain on the property the tiny house on wheels must be converted as per no. 2 above.

Development Permit Area Guidelines

Tiny houses on wheels must comply with Section 14.10 of the Official Community Plan: "*Accessory Dwelling Unit and Tiny House Development Permit Area (ADU DPA)*", as outlined below:

Buildings and Structures

- 1) Orient buildings to maximize opportunities for passive solar heating and natural lighting.
- 2) Consider adaptable design and universal accessibility.
- 3) Use natural ventilation and cooling systems.
- 4) Consider the use of green roof systems to reduce stormwater runoff, reduce energy costs and improve visual appearance.
- 5) Use building products that demonstrate re-use, upcycling and green technology.
- 6) Developments are encouraged to seek Passive House, LEED, or other sustainability

certification.

- 7) Where garages or carports are necessary, design them to be recessed within the building or set back from the front face of the building.
- 8) Buildings should be clad with durable, aesthetically acceptable and environmentally friendly materials at least as good of quality as primary dwelling; vinyl and aluminum siding are not acceptable.
- 9) Tiny houses on wheels must be skirted with a finished insulating material the same quality as or complementary to the cladding of the tiny house.
- 10) In all residential zones, tiny houses on wheels must have a deck or porch attached, with appropriate stairs or ramp, to signify that they are semi-permanent in nature.

Utilities / Servicing

- 1) Buildings must share the services of the primary unit as per the City bylaws for water, sewer and electrical services.

Parking / Access

- 1) Entrances should face the street (or laneway, if sited on a lane) and have direct pedestrian access from the street. Windows should provide "eyes on the lane" for security.
- 2) Shared driveways are encouraged to reduce paved surfaces.
- 3) Provide vehicle access via rear lanes where they are available.

Screening and Landscaping

- 1) Provide private outdoor space of at least 9 square metres for each of the primary residence and accessory dwelling unit.
- 2) Provide for clothesline use.
- 3) Limit the use of potable water for landscape irrigation.
- 4) Provide natural filtration of rainwater into the site through techniques including raingardens, rainwater collection systems, bio swales and permeable paving or crushed rock for driveways.



How to Get Approval for a Tiny House

1. Pre-application meeting

Contact City staff to discuss your ideas and preliminary plans for your tiny house. Note that you will be required to apply for a Temporary Use Permit and a Building Permit. City staff will help to define the next steps in the process. Although the City will notify

neighbouring property owners about your application for a tiny house, it is suggested that you discuss your proposal with your neighbours to gain their support.

2. Apply for a Temporary Land Use Permit

This permit is required to ensure that the form and character of the tiny house fits into the existing neighbourhood and that it meets the regulations and guidelines. Make an appointment with City staff to submit your application. A [Temporary Land Use Permit Application](#) must be accompanied by a completed questionnaire and drawings/plans, including:

A legible site plan, drawn to scale, showing the following:

- a. The boundaries and dimensions of the subject property.
- b. The location, setbacks and dimensions of the proposed and present buildings.
- c. The location of off-street parking.
- d. The location of proposed access roads, pedestrian access routes, screening, landscaping and fencing.
- e. Photos and/or elevation plans showing height, exterior finishing and colour, windows and doors and roof pitch.

The questionnaire will help determine if your proposed tiny house meets the Development Guidelines in the Grand Forks Official Community Plan (OCP).

3. Plan check and referral

The application will be checked by City staff to ensure that it is complete and that the proposed tiny house conforms to City requirements. Staff may also refer the application to the Fire and Public Works Departments.

4. Application is considered by Grand Forks City Council for the first time

An initial staff report with recommendations will be considered by City Council at one of its regular Council meetings. You are welcome to attend to answer any questions. Council will pass a resolution authorizing (or not) staff to proceed with the public notification process.

5. Neighbours are notified of the proposal for a tiny house on wheels

All landowners within 30 metres of your property will be notified in writing of your application and invited to ask questions and/or provide comments to City staff. All written comments will be transmitted to City Council when it considers your permit application for final approval.

6. Proposal is advertised in the local newspaper

The proposal for a tiny house is advertised in the local newspaper to advise the public of the application and when it will be given final consideration by City Council.

7. Application is considered by Grand Forks City Council for the second time

After hearing any comments received as a result of the above public notification process, City Council will pass a resolution to approve (or deny) the permit.

8. Temporary Land Use Permit is Issued

City staff will then issue the permit (with or without conditions). This permit will be sent to the Land Titles Office and registered on the title of your property.

9. Apply for a Building Permit

Once your Temporary Use Permit is issued, you may apply for a [Building Permit](#). It is noted that in most cases a building permit and temporary use permit application may be reviewed by City staff concurrently. Information respecting building permits and inspections can be found [here](#).