

Secondary Units in Existing or New Dwellings

Existing dwellings may be modified to create a secondary unit through:

- internal renovations or
- an addition.

New dwellings may be designed and constructed to include a secondary unit.

It is the homeowners responsibility to ensure that a secondary dwelling unit is lawfully permitted by the zoning by-law and that all necessary approvals, including a building permit and fire safety inspection, are obtained before a dwelling unit is created and/ or occupied.

Please contact City staff to obtain more information on zoning conformity and any necessary approvals.

If purchasing a dwelling with an existing secondary unit, it is recommended that the new owner contact the City to confirm that the dwelling unit conforms with all necessary Zoning, Building Code and Fire Code requirements.

For more information, contact:



City of Sarnia
255 Christina Street North
PO Box 3018
SARNIA ON N7T 7N2

Community Development Services & Standards

Telephone: (519) 332-0330, Ext. 3303
Planning Division: planning@sarnia.ca
Building Division: building@sarnia.ca
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Community Development Services & Standards

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City of Sarnia

SECONDARY DWELLING UNITS



A GUIDE TO SECONDARY DWELLING UNITS

GENERAL INFORMATION

The City's Zoning By-law was amended in 2017 to permit the creation of secondary dwelling units within single detached, semi-detached, and townhouse dwellings - subject to the requirements of the zoning by-law. Map 1 shows the locations in the City where secondary units are permitted.

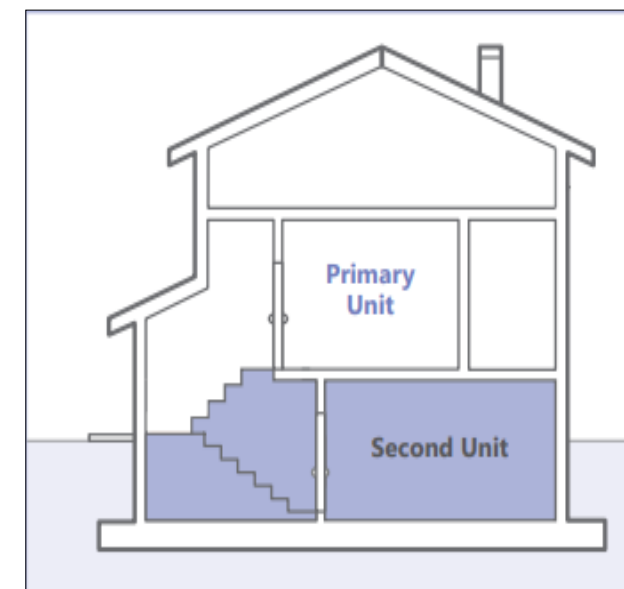
A maximum of one secondary unit is permitted per dwelling unit. Secondary units are permitted in all areas of the City where full municipal services (piped water and sanitary sewers) are provided and servicing capacity available, as shown on Map 1.

This amendment to the zoning by-law was done to increase the supply of rental housing units in the City and to make the cost of home ownership more affordable for homeowners that wish to establish a secondary unit.

What is a Secondary Dwelling Unit?

A secondary dwelling unit — also known as accessory or basement apartment, secondary suite, or in-law flat — is a self-contained residential unit that includes its own entrance, a private sleeping area, kitchen, and bathroom facilities.

Illustration of a basement secondary unit



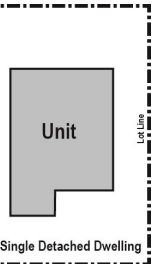
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Zoning By-law (ZBL)?

The City's Zoning By-law No. 85 of 2002 controls the use of land in the City including the types of buildings that are permitted and how they may be used. The ZBL establishes minimum standards for lot sizes, parking requirements, building heights and setbacks from the street and lot lines.

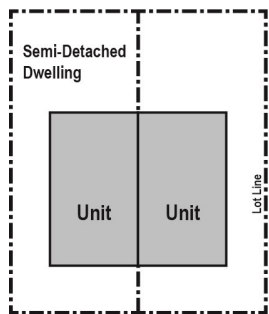
What is a Single Detached Dwelling?

A building on a lot containing only one dwelling unit.



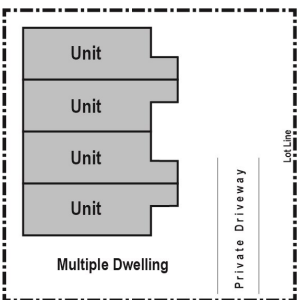
What is a Semi-Detached Dwelling?

A dwelling divided vertically into two (2) separate dwelling units. The building may be located on one lot or two separate lots with a common lot line between the units.



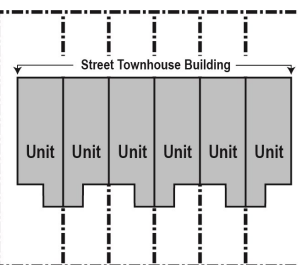
What is a Multiple-Attached Dwelling?

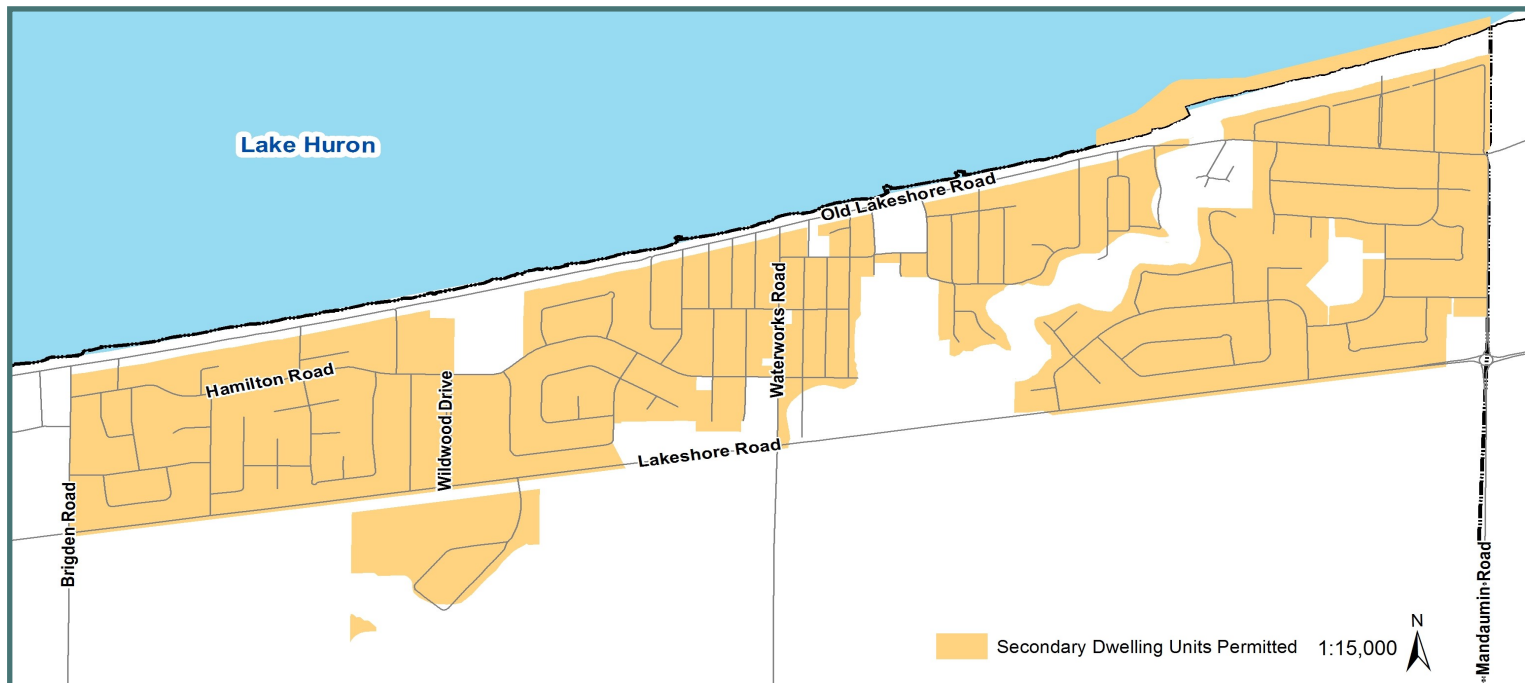
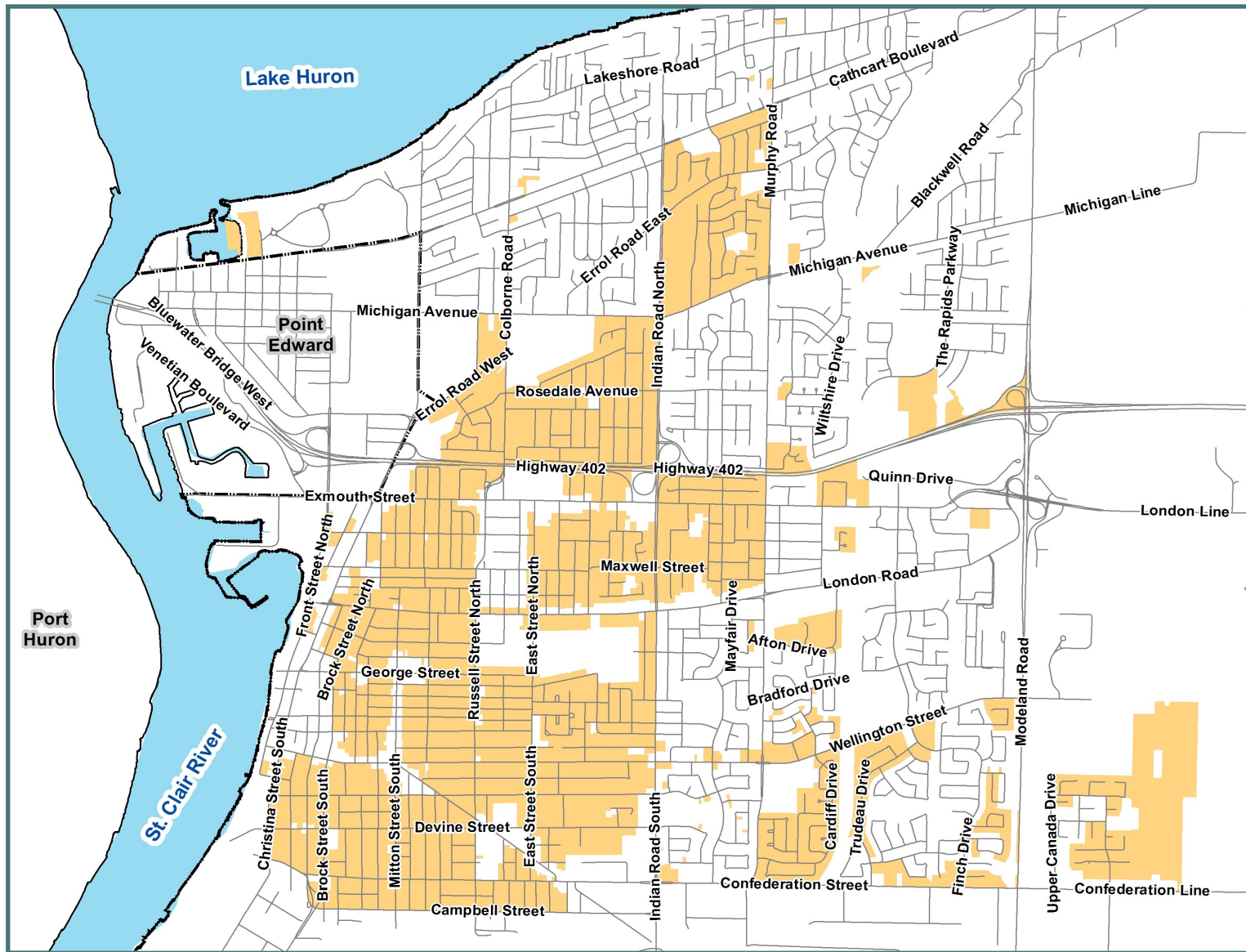
A dwelling divided vertically into three (3) or more separate dwelling units with no interior access between the units. Multiple attached dwellings are located on one lot and driveway access is provided via a common parking area.



What is a Street Multiple-Attached Dwelling?

A dwelling divided vertically into three (3) or more separate dwelling units with no interior access between the units. Street multiple attached dwellings are located on one lot or separate lots for each unit and they have frontage on a public street.





ZONING REGULATIONS

The regulations for secondary dwelling units are provided in Section 3.10 of the City's Zoning By-law No. 85 of 2002.

Secondary Dwelling Units are Permitted in:

In any single detached, semi-detached, multiple attached, or street multiple attached dwelling unit located in any **UR2, UR3, UR4 or UR5 Zone.**

In any single detached dwelling in a **UR1** Zone as shown on Zoning By-law Map Parts:

9, 10, 13, 20, 21, 43, 44, 45, 55, 58, 59*

provided that:

- The gross floor area of the secondary dwelling unit is not greater than 40% of the combined habitable floor area of the primary dwelling unit and the secondary dwelling unit, with the exception that if the secondary unit is located in the basement, it may occupy the entire basement.
- No exterior alterations shall be permitted to the front or exterior side yard elevations of the primary dwelling to provide for an entrance to the secondary dwelling unit.

Unit Size

Secondary dwelling units shall provide a minimum gross floor area of 35 m² (377 ft²).

***For more information, view the City of Sarnia Zoning By-law here:**

<http://sarnia.ca/doing-business/property-development/planning-documents/zoning-by-law-85-of-2002>

Building Permits

Secondary units shall conform to all applicable Ontario *Building Code* and Ontario *Fire Code* regulations and shall require a building permit and fire safety inspections.

Parking

A minimum of one (1) on-site parking space is required for each secondary dwelling unit in addition to the minimum parking space(s) required for the main dwelling. Required parking spaces may be provided in tandem. A tandem parking space is a space accessed by passing through another parking space.

Restrictions

Secondary dwelling units shall not be located in "Natural Hazards" areas where flooding is a potential concern.

Secondary units are not permitted on lots serviced by private septic systems.

Lot Size and Setbacks

The minimum lot frontage, lot area and landscaped open space provided for a secondary unit are the same as the main dwelling. Any dwelling additions needed to construct a secondary dwelling unit shall provide the minimum setbacks required for the main dwelling on the lot.