



Secondary Dwelling Units

A Homeowner's Guide

Prepared by:
Building Department
Township of
Laurentian Valley
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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
What is a Second Unit?	2
How do I make my Second Unit legal?	3
When will I need approvals and permits/inspections?	4
Planning for a Second Unit	5
Step 1: Do Your Homework	6
Can I build a Second Unit on my property?	6
How can I build an attached Second Unit?	7
What are the entrance requirements for a Second Unit?	8
How many parking spaces do I need?	8
Can I build a Second Unit on a privately serviced lot?	8
Do I need to consider on-site drainage?	9
What can I do if my property does not meet the zoning requirements?	9
Step 2: Build Your Second Unit	10
What are the Building Code requirements for a Second Unit?	10
Who can help me draw my plans?	10
Can my contractor/designer apply for the building permit on my behalf?	10
What does a complete building permit application include?	11
How long will it take to get a building permit?	11
How much are building permit fees?	12
What should I consider in the exterior and interior design of my Second Unit?	12
Step 3: Register Your Second Unit	13
What are the benefits of registering my Second Unit?	13
When do I submit my registration application?	13
How much will it cost to register my Second Unit? Will I be required to renew my registration?	14
Once I have registered my Second Unit, will it be assigned a separate address?	14
Is a list of registered Second Units publically available?	14
Once I develop a Second Unit, what are my responsibilities as a landlord?	14
Who do I contact? Where can I find information?	15

Introduction

This guide has been created to help homeowners understand how to build a safe, legal and functional second dwelling unit (Secondary Dwelling) in the Township of Laurentian Valley. It gives a summary of land use planning and building permit requirements. If there are any differences between this reference document and the formal regulations and by-laws, the formal regulations will apply.

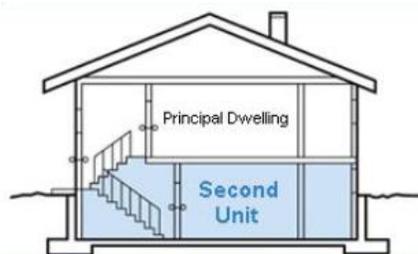
What is a Second Unit?

A Second Unit may also be known as one of these many names:

- accessory dwelling unit
- secondary unit
- accessory apartment
- in-law suite
- granny flat
- garage suite
- basement apartment

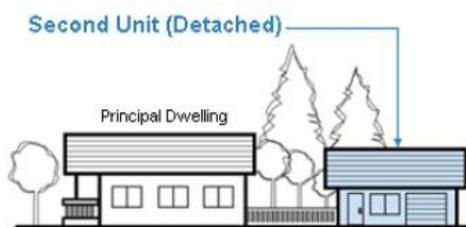
It is a **separate living space with kitchen, bathroom, sleeping and shared laundry facilities or a space with the required connections and hook-ups, that is located on the same property as your house** (detached, semi-detached or row house). You can live in it, allow your family members to live in it, or rent it out. It cannot be severed from the lot of the principal dwelling and/or sold.

Attached Second Unit



- Located within or attached to the existing house
- Laundry room may be private or shared
- Example: basement apartment
- Must be registered under the Township of Laurentian Valley Second Dwelling Units Registration By-law

Detached Second Unit



- Located in a detached accessory structure (e.g. a detached garage)
- Example: Coach house or garage suite
- Must be registered under the Township of Laurentian Valley Second Dwelling Units Registration By-law

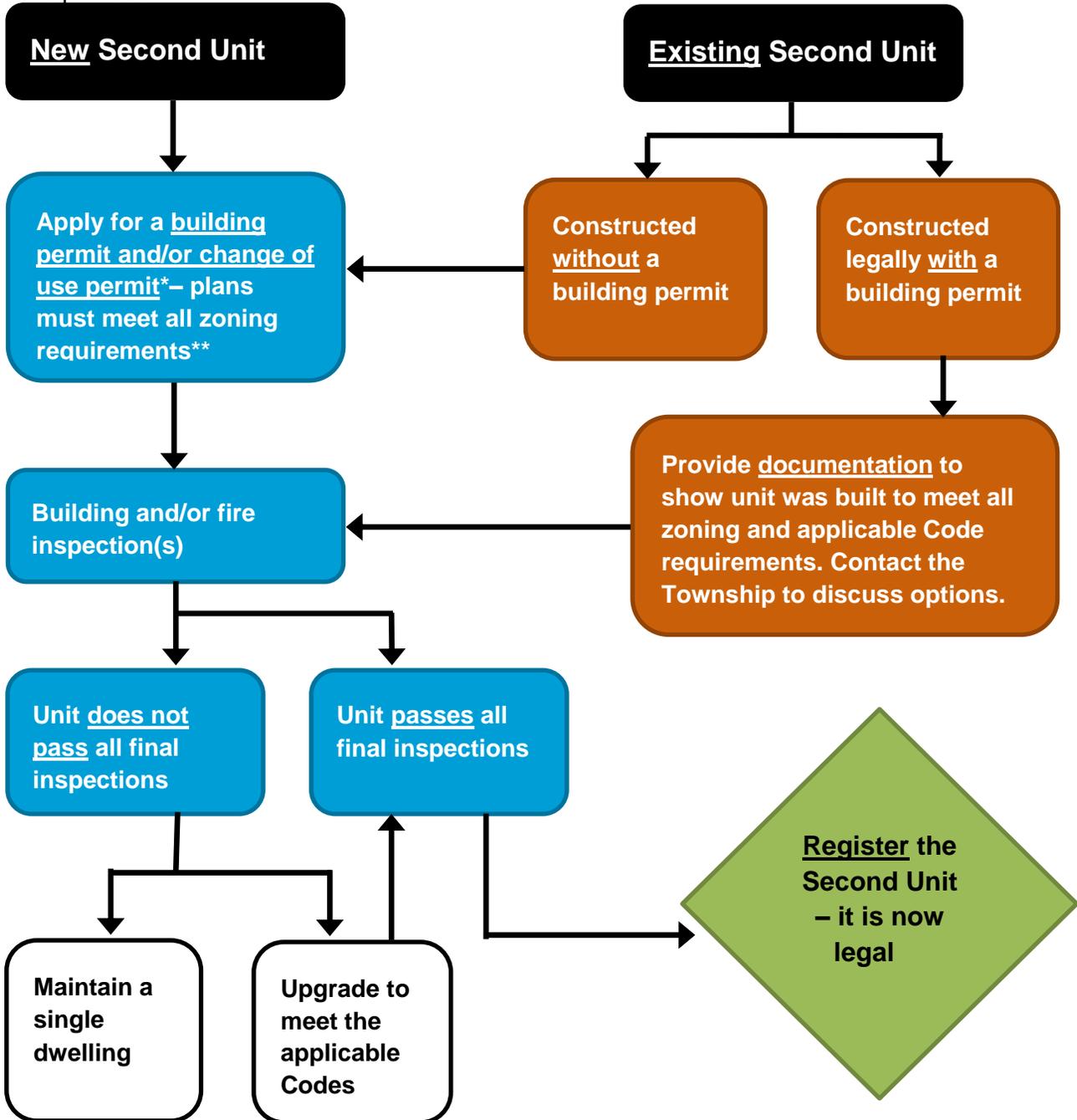
Garden Suite



- A detached apartment that is meant to be portable and provide short-term housing
- Its use is secondary to an existing home
- Is registered and permitted as a temporary use for a period up to 10 years through a Temporary Use By-law

How do I make my Second Unit legal?

To be legal, **your Second Unit must be registered with the Township.** To register your unit, it must comply with the Township's Zoning By-Law, the Ontario Building Code, the Ontario Fire Code and the Ontario Electrical Code. The chart below gives an overview of the process:



* All Second Units require a building permit and/or a change of use permit.

**If you cannot meet all zoning requirements, you can apply for a zoning by-law amendment or minor variance for your property.

When will I need approvals and permits/ inspections?

You will need the appropriate approvals from the Township of Laurentian Valley and must comply with the; the Township's Zoning By-Law, the Ontario Building, the Ontario Fire and Ontario Electrical Code's. The following helps identify which approvals and permits/ inspections you will need in the stages of constructing your Second Unit:

Before you build

1. Check that your Second Unit meets the Township's Zoning By-law (<http://www.lvtownship.ca>). More information on zoning requirements is in the "Step 1: Do Your Homework" section of this Guide. Please contact the Township for assistance at 613-735-6291.
2. Submit a building permit application – including any required plans – to the Township; it will be reviewed by both the Building Department for compliance with the Ontario Building Code and Township's Planning Department for compliance with the Township's Zoning By-Law. More information on building permit requirements is included in the "Step 2: Build Your Second Unit" section of this Guide and on the Township's website at: <http://www.lvtownship.ca>.

Once you have your building permit

- When your building permit is issued, inspections will be required at certain stages of the construction process. These will be specified to you when the building permit is issued. You must contact the Township's Building Department to book the required inspections.
- 3.

- Electrical work requires a separate permit and Inspection Report from the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) to ensure compliance with the Ontario Electrical Safety Code. Information on obtaining this permit and Inspection Report is on the ESA's website: <http://www.esasafe.com/consumers/permits-and-inspections/what-you-need-to-know>.
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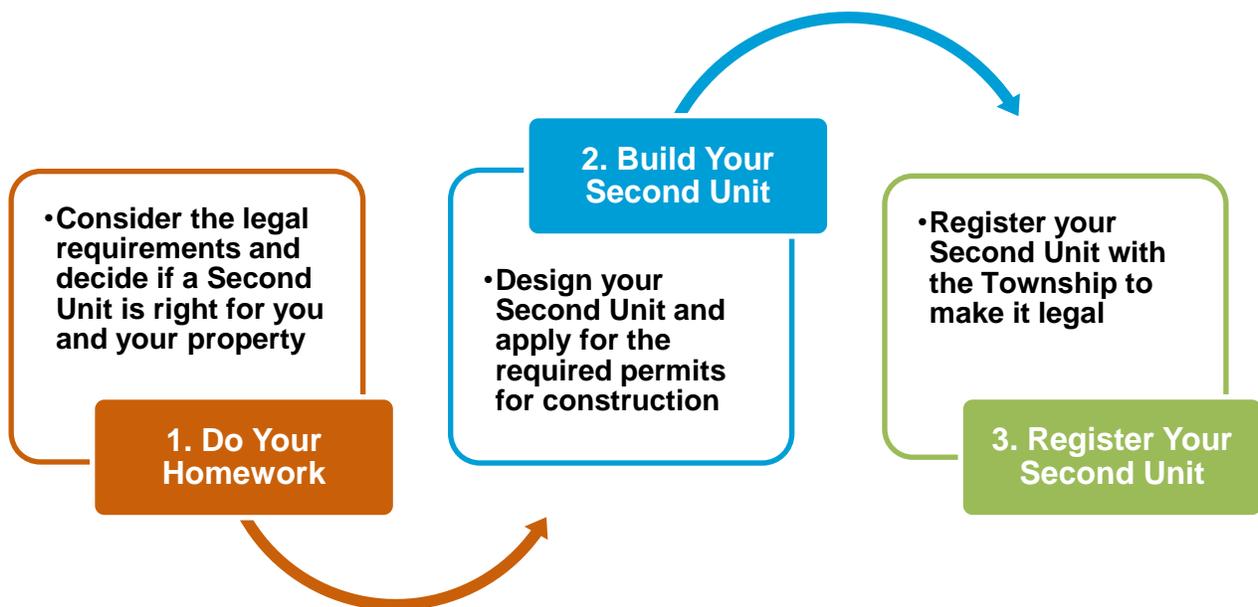
After your Second Unit is built

- You must register your Second Unit after you have a Final Inspection Report from the Township. Re-inspection for compliance with the Fire Code will occur every 5 years.
5. While the Building Code regulates the construction of the Second Unit, the Fire Code regulates its maintenance and operation after it has been built and registered with the Township.

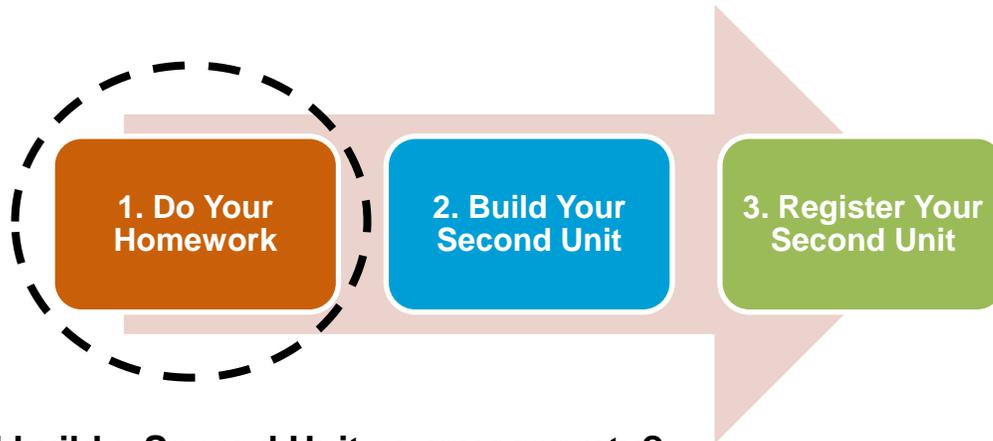
"Step 3: Register Your Second Unit" section of this Guide contains further information.

Planning for a Second Unit

There are three main steps to building a legal Second Unit on your property:



Step 1: Do Your Homework

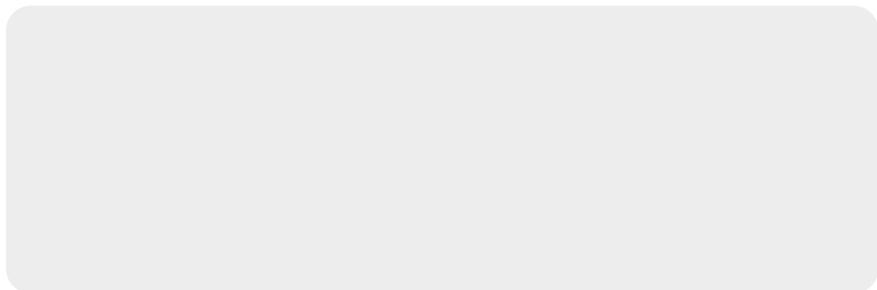


Can I build a Second Unit on my property?

If you meet all of the basic criteria below, then you should be able to build a Second Unit on your property. However, you must also meet other zoning requirements (e.g. parking and entrance) as well as the applicable standards of the Ontario Building, Fire, and Electrical Code's. Please contact the Township (613-735-6291) to confirm your particular circumstances.

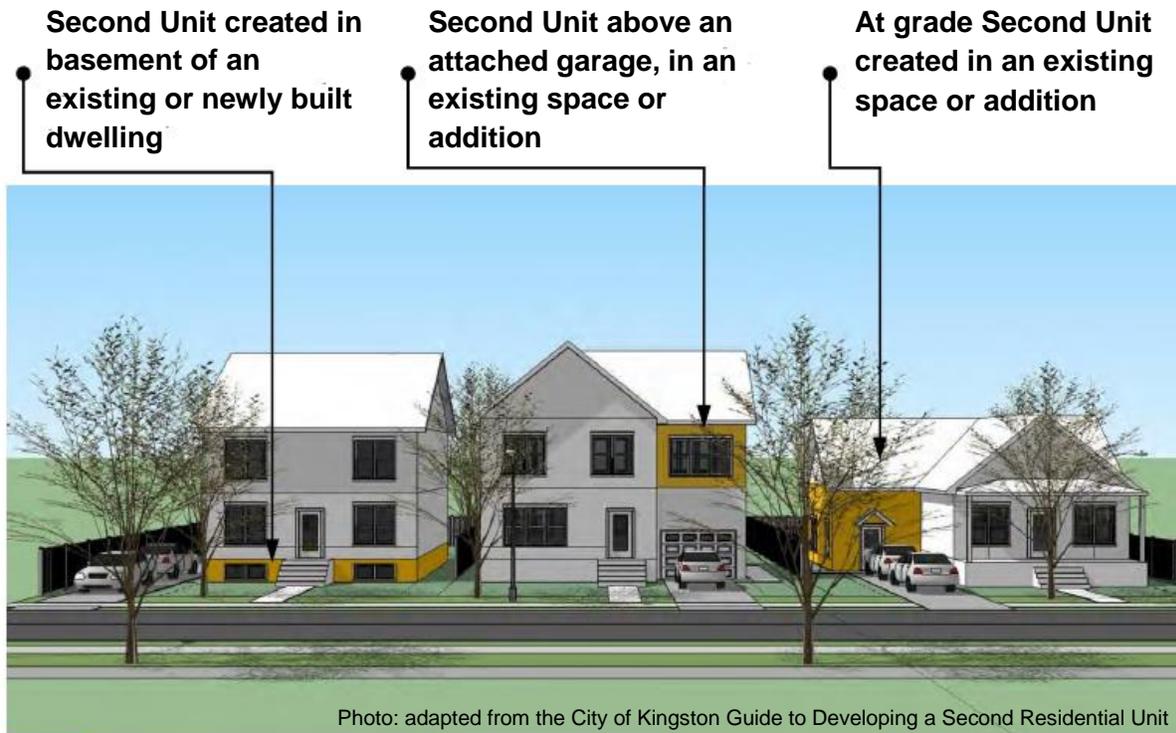
Basic Zoning Criteria:

- I live in a single-detached house, semi-detached house or a freehold street townhouse;
- I do not have a garden suite, lodging house or group home on my property already (Note: You can only have one Second Unit on your property);
- I do not live in a house within the Ottawa River Floodplain, or on lands in a Natural Heritage Feature zone.
- I do not live within hazard lands, such as flood-prone or highly erosive areas, or areas with slope stability issues; (this is determined by the planner); and,
- **my lot has adequate servicing to accommodate a secondary unit; including, but not limited to water supply, waste water disposal and electricity.**



How can I build an attached Second Unit?

Below are a few examples of different ways to build an attached Second Unit:



Orange shading shows location of Second Unit

Regardless of how you decide to build your Second Unit, it will need to meet all applicable Code requirements and the Township's Zoning By-law.

Can I build a detached Second Unit?

Yes, but in order to build a Second Unit in a detached structure (e.g. garage) you must be able to meet all of the following zoning requirements:

- Your lot is large enough for an accessory building and is serviced by municipal water and sewer services.
- Your Second Unit cannot be more than one storey; and,
- Your Second Unit must be able to meet all applicable Zoning By-law provisions, such as minimum setbacks from lot lines.
- If do not have access to Municipal water & sewer services, your lot must be larger than 0.8 hectares (2 acres)

Your detached Second Unit will also need to meet the standards of the Ontario Building, Ontario Fire and Ontario Electrical Code's.

What are the entrance requirements for a Second Unit?

All Second Units must have their own separate entrance. The separate entrance may be from the front, side or rear of the building, but it must meet the following requirements:

- The entrance cannot be from a garage, unless there is a separate man door with direct outdoor access;
- The entrance must be accessed by a minimum 1 metre wide path of travel between the building and any lot line; and,
- Safe entrance and exit of the Second Unit must meet the requirements of the Ontario Building Code and the Ontario Fire Code.

How many parking spaces do I need?

You must supply parking for the Second Unit in addition to the minimum 1 off-street parking space that is required for your home (the principal dwelling).

Please note the following when determining the number of parking spaces on your property:

- Each exterior parking space must be a minimum of 2.5 metres wide and 5 metres long;
- Parking spaces both inside the garage or outside on the driveway can be counted;
- Any spaces for parking in the boulevard area between the street and your front lot line will not be counted towards these requirements;
- If your property cannot provide enough parking right now, you might be able to widen your driveway to meet the required number of parking spaces; and,

Can I build a Second Unit on a privately serviced lot (i.e. individual well and septic)?

Yes, but you may be required to demonstrate that the system has sufficient capacity for the Second Unit. The Ministry of the Environment has rules for the quantity and quality of water that a private residential well must provide. The capacity and design of a private septic system is regulated by the Ontario Building Code. The minimum lot area is 8,000 m² (approximately 2 acres)

Do I need to consider on-site drainage?

On-site drainage and storm water management must be maintained or improved with the addition of a Second Unit. For example, the construction of a side yard walkway has the potential to alter the way surface runoff flows to storm water management drains. A site grading plan may be required to ensure that any changes made to your property do not negatively impact grading and drainage on your property or your neighbours, to limit the possibility of flooding.

What can I do if my property does not meet the zoning requirements?

If your property cannot meet the zoning requirements for Second Units, you may have the opportunity to apply for a minor variance or a zoning by-law amendment. These processes are summarized as follows.

Minor Variance Application

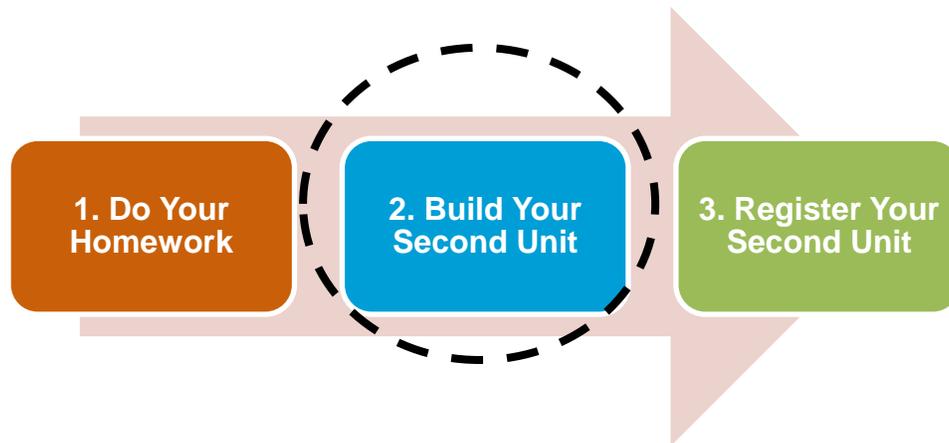
- The minor variance process allows for a property owner to seek relief from a specific provision of the Township's zoning by-law. It will typically take about 2 months for your application to be processed. Additional details and the application form are on the Town's website: <http://www.lvtownship.ca>

Zoning By-Law Amendment

- If the requested relief from the Township's zoning by-law is not determined to be minor, a site-specific zoning by-law amendment may be required, subject to Council approval. This process typically takes about 4-6 months. An application form can be found on the Town's website: <http://www.lvtownship.ca>

Please contact the Township's Planning Department (613-735-6291) to discuss which process best suits your situation.

Step 2: Build Your Second Unit



What are the Building Code requirements for a Second Unit?

Under the Ontario Building Code, you will need a building and/or a change of use permit. There are different scenarios that apply to Second Units under the Building Code:

- **Scenario 1: Building a Second Unit in a new home or house less than 5 years old.**
Part 9 of the Building Code applies. Submit a building permit application.
- **Scenario 2: Building a Second Unit in a house more than 5 years old.**
Part 11 of the Building Code applies. Submit a building permit application.
- **Scenario 3: Second Unit has already been built without a building permit.**
Submit detailed floor plans to secure a change of use permit. You may also need to make renovations to your unit, to comply with building or fire codes.

Should I get help to draw my plans?

It is strongly recommended that you hire a qualified designer. The Building Code requirements for Second Units are complex. A qualified designer will help ensure that your plans meet all technical requirements, saving you time and money in the long run. The designer may be an architect, engineer or a person certified and registered with the [Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing \(MMAH\)](#). Designer qualifications can be viewed on the Ministry's on-line Public Registry ([QuARTS](#)).

Can my contractor/designer apply for the building permit on my behalf?

Under the Ontario Building Code, the owner is responsible for all construction on your property. If you want your contractor or designer to apply on your behalf, you must provide written authorization, the permit will name you as the owner and correspondence from the Building Department will go to you also.

What does a complete building permit application include?

Once you have checked that your Second Unit meets the zoning requirements, you can submit your Building Permit or Change of Use Application. Your Second Unit must comply with the Ontario Building Code. Your building permit application will typically include the following:

- A site plan showing compliance with zoning requirements such as the number of parking spaces and the entrance path to the Second Unit
- A floor plan of the existing or proposed Second Unit
- Cross-section drawings of walls/ceilings and details of the materials and systems used
- Items to be shown on the plans for the Second Unit include:
 - Entrance and exit
 - Room sizes and heights
 - Door and window sizes and types
 - Fire separations and sound transmission ratings
 - Heating and ventilation system(s)
 - Location of smoke alarms, and CO detectors
 - Plumbing facilities

How long will it take to get a building permit?

After submitting your complete building permit application, it will typically take the Building Department **about 10 business days** to process it. You will be contacted if further information is required. You can start construction after obtaining the permit.

How much are building permit fees?

Permit fees are reviewed annually and subject to change. All fees are outlined in the Townships Fee Schedules, available on-line at www.lvtownship.ca (Currently a minimum \$125.00)

What should I consider in the exterior and interior design of my Second Unit?

You should design your Second Unit so that it blends in with your neighbourhood. Any urban design guidelines that affect your property must be followed. The following are some things to keep in mind when designing your unit so that will be functional and blend in with your home and neighbourhood:

Design Considerations:

- Match any new windows, doors and materials (e.g. siding, brick, plaster, shingles, etc.) to the current ones on your home, especially at the front of the house
- Maintain current rooflines if you are adding on dormers or an addition to your second story (e.g. above your attached garage)
- Build a privacy fence or other landscape screening between your neighbours, especially if the Second Unit has a side or rear entry
- Use permeable surfaces when providing additional parking
- Provide storage space for household items and garbage facilities
- Provide outdoor amenity space (e.g. deck or patio) for your tenants



Example of a second dwelling unit with an entrance that blends in with the existing architecture

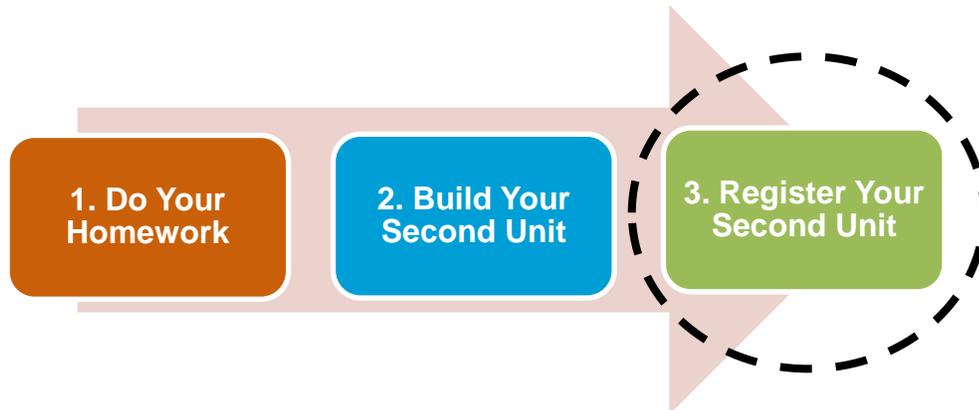
Health and Safety Considerations:

- Accommodate individuals with mobility challenges with appropriate hallway and door widths, bathroom and kitchen fixture placement, stair configuration, etc.
- Ensure you have adequate outdoor lighting, while still minimizing the projection of light onto neighbouring properties
- Provide a hard/stable walkway to the Second Unit entrance if it is not at the front of the house

Service Considerations:

- **Separate electrical service, do you want to include hydro in the rent, or do you want to have them on a separate service & meter? There should be a separate breaker panel for the secondary unit, you don't want the tenants bothering you everytime a breaker trips, what would they do if you were away?**
- **Will there be a separate heating system? Will they have there own gas service or propane tank? There should be a separate thermostat to control the heat in the secondary unit.**
- **There will have to be separate water service valves to the secondary unit, so the tenants can shut off the water to the unit in the event of a break or equipment malfunction.**

Step 3: Register Your Second Unit



What are the benefits of registering my Second Unit?

The benefits include:

- **It provides safety for you and the occupants**, by ensuring that the Second Unit meets zoning, building, fire and electrical code requirements; while emergency services will be aware that a Second Unit exists.
- **It allows you to obtain proper home insurance**, which gives you peace of mind that you will be covered if you make a claim for damage to your home and be protected against personal liability.
- **You will receive a second municipal address**, which in addition to identifying each unit for emergency services, will allow for both the primary unit and the Second Unit to put out garbage and recycling for collection and for a separate mailbox to be assigned to the Second Unit.

When do I submit my registration application?

After you have built your Second Unit and had your final inspection from the Building Department, you must apply to register your Second Unit. A complete application for registration includes the following:



*The property owner must declare the following on the registration form: That you are the property owner or the authorized agent.

How much will it cost to register my Second Unit? Will I be required to renew my registration?

There is an Application Fee of \$120.00 which is waived until January 1, 2019. Then there is a one-time registration fee of \$200.00 . There is also a \$50.00 fee for a change in ownership, so the registry can be amended.

Once I have registered my Second Unit, will it be assigned a separate address?

Yes, once you register your Second Unit it will be assigned a secondary address of “Unit 2 or Unit B; your choice” (the address for the primary dwelling will stay the same). The address of “Unit 2 or Unit B” must be clearly visible to identify the primary entrance into the Second Unit. Having a second municipal address will help emergency services such as police, fire and ambulance to act more quickly in an emergency. It will also make mail, delivery services hydro & gas billing more convenient and ensure that garbage and recycling is picked up from both residential units.

Is a list of registered Second Units publically available?

Yes, a list containing the addresses of legally registered Second Units is available for in person viewing at the Township Municipal Office located at 460 Witt Road. This list will also make it easier for tenants to identify whether a Second Unit is legal, (and that it complies with building, fire and electrical codes).

Once I develop a Second Unit, what are my responsibilities as a landlord?

The rights and responsibility of a landlord are outlined in the Residential Tenancies Act. This information for landlords in Ontario is available from the [Landlord and Tenant Board](#).

All property owners must also follow the Township's Zoning By-Law and Ontario Building Code and Ontario Fire Code provisions, as well as the Township's Property Standards By-law, which establishes standards for the maintenance of properties and buildings, such as interior and exterior yard maintenance.

Who do I contact? Where can I find information?

Please contact the Town's Customer Service by calling 613-735-6291 or visiting the Township Municipal Office during business hours. You can also find information and email contact info on the Township's website:

www.lvtownship.ca

The following is a list of key contacts and website links that will help you through each step in constructing a legal Second Unit:

Step 1: "Do Your Homework" – Key Contacts

Township of Laurentian Valley Planning Services (check zoning requirements)

Phone: 613-735-6291

Website: <http://www.lvtownship.ca-law/departments/planning>

Township of Laurentian Valley Building Department (information on Building and Fire Code issues) Phone 613-735-6291

Website: <http://www.lvtownship.ca/departments/building>

Step 2: "Build Your Second Unit" – Key Contacts

Township of Laurentian Valley Building Department (for building permits and inspections)

Phone: 613-735-6291

Website: <http://www.lvtownship.ca/departments/building>

Electrical Safety Authority (for an electrical permit)

Phone: 1-877-372-7233

Website: <http://www.esasafe.com/consumers/permits-and-inspections/what-you-need-to-know>

Step 3: "Register Your Second Unit" – Key Contacts

Township of Laurentian Valley Building Department (for registration application form)

Phone: 613-735-6291, or download from <http://www.lvtownship.ca/forms-and-applications>