

City of Maple Ridge

SUBJECT:	Allowing Larger Detached Garden Suites on Residential Lots		
FROM:	Chief Administrative Officer	MEETING:	Workshop
TO:	His Worship Mayor Dan Ruimy and Members of Council	MEETING DATE: FILE NO:	July 11, 2023 13-6440-20

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Detached garden suites (DGS), also known as accessory dwelling units, are an important component of homeownership attainability as these forms can be mortgage helpers and contribute to the community's rental stock. At the April 26, 2022, Council Workshop meeting, Council was presented with accessory dwelling unit regulatory options that would positively impact current and future residents by expanding the DGS and secondary suite regulations. At this meeting, Council directed staff to proceed with ten of the eleven recommendations, including #8, permitting larger DGSs in specific residential zones.

The April 26, 2022, recommendation to allow larger DGSs on residential lots stems from the support heard during two public consultation processes (see Appendix A for details), with the most recent process being initiated at the Council Workshop on May 1, 2018. At this meeting, Council directed staff to undertake the Detached Garden Suite Pilot Project, which facilitated constructed examples of larger detached garden suites (up to 140m² (1,500 ft²) or 15% of the lot area, whichever is less), and public tours of the completed projects. The Pilot Project outcomes were presented to Council at the April 14, 2020, Council Workshop and it was clear that allowing larger DGSs was strongly supported by residents. Planning staff continue to receive inquiries regarding the potential of having larger DGSs on a regular basis. Many families, including those who participated in the Detached Garden Suite Pilot Project, are looking to construct a DGS as an attainable way live close to family.

Allowing larger DGSs algins with the Official Community Plan as it supports "age-in-place" concepts. Allowing larger DGSs can provide a better variety of DGS sizes and number of bedrooms where there is already infrastructure in place. Expanding the DGS program is also supported by the Housing Action Plan and the findings within the Housing Needs Report. The Housing Needs Report emphasized that seniors looking to downsize and remain in the community have limited options and that DGSs could provide a suitable ground-oriented option for seniors who are not interested in apartment-style living.

Today, there are approximately 11,500 properties that are currently eligible to build a DGS within Maple Ridge (Appendix D). To date, there are 64 constructed DGSs and 22 DGS applications in-stream (Appendix C).

This report discusses the proposed changes to the Zoning Bylaw to allow larger DGSs in zones that already allow DGSs (Appendix B). These changes will not expand where DGSs are allowed in Maple Ridge. Should Council move the recommendation forward for staff to bring forward amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to allow DGSs up to 140m² (1,500 ft²) or 15% of the lot area, whichever is less, a report and draft bylaw will be brought to a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT staff bring forward amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to permit detached garden suites up to 140m² (1,500 ft²) or 15% of the lot area, whichever is less, in the following zones: A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, RS-1, RS-1a, RS-1b, RS-1c, RS-1d, RS-2, RS-3, and SRS.

1.0 CONTEXT

1.1 Recent Work

At the April 26, 2022, Council Workshop, staff presented eleven regulatory options that were explored during the public consultation and review of accessory dwelling unit regulations in 2017 as well as the Detached Garden Suite Pilot Project (2018-2020). During the Workshop, Council directed staff to bring forward a report with detailed information and a description of the amendments for ten of the eleven recommendations. Table 1 below outlines the ten recommendations Council directed staff to move forward with, as well as the progress on each item. For information on work completed prior to 2022, see Appendix A, which outlines work from 2016 to 2020 regarding to potentially allow larger DGSs.

	Item	Progress
1.	Removal of the maximum and minimum gross floor area requirement for secondary suites	Completed. Bylaw 7857-2022 adopted September 27, 2022.
2.	Development of 'Alternate Compliance Methods for Alterations to Existing Buildings to Add a Secondary Suite' in the BC Building Code	In progress. More information to come.
3.	Options to potentially allow secondary suites in all single- detached residential zones	In progress. More information to come.
4.	Permitting secondary suites in ground-orientated duplexes and townhouses	In progress (duplex only). More information to come.
5.	Permitting secondary suites and detached garden suites on the same lot in the Agricultural Land Reserve	Report to Council May 2, 2023.
6.	Allowing flexible siting of a detached garden suite on a lot	More information to come in Q3 2023.
7.	Removal of the minimum gross floor area requirement for detached garden suites	Completed. Bylaw 7857-2022 adopted September 27, 2022.
8.	Permitting larger detached garden suites in specific residential zones	Discussed in this report.
9.	Permitting secondary suites and detached garden suites on the same lot in all residential zones	More information to come in Q3 2023.
10.	Development of program, for council consideration, that would create "pre-approved" building plan templates for detached garden suites	Subject to Council input, process to be initiated in Q4 2023.

Table 1: Council Directed Work and Progress to Date Since May 2023

1.2 Official Community Plan Policy Alignment

Maple Ridge's Official Community Plan (OCP) reflects the community's long-term vision to become more vibrant and prosperous, offering residents stable and special neighbourhoods, thoughtful development, and respect for the built and natural environment. Through the OCP housing policies, the need to provide a mix of housing types, densities, and affordable options is recognized. In order to meet the diverse residential needs of local residents, the OCP housing policies are intended to help:

- Accommodate growth through infill by promoting housing types and tenures to support diverse needs, lifestyles, and preferences (Policy 3-1), by considering disparities in age, income, and mobility;
- Support the provision of rental accommodation and encourage the construction of rental units that vary in size and number of bedrooms (Policy 3-31); and
- Encourage housing that incorporates "age-in-place" concepts and seniors housing designed to accommodate special needs (Policy 3-33).

1.3 Housing Action Plan Alignment

Council endorsed the Housing Action Plan on September 30, 2014, and the Housing Action Plan Implementation Framework on September 14, 2015. The development and endorsement of the Housing Action Plan provides the opportunity to identify strategies and implement actions to enhance the Official Community Plan policy direction for affordable, rental, and special needs housing. The Implementation Framework contains actions that are based on the Housing Action Plan's strategies.

There are endorsed strategies of the Housing Action Plan that relate to detached garden suites. The endorsed strategies are:

- Create new rental housing opportunities; and
- Expand the garden suites program.

1.4 Housing Needs Report Findings

On February 9, 2021, Council received a Housing Needs Report, which provided an understanding of current and anticipated housing needs within Maple Ridge. The Housing Needs Report found that there is a growing disconnect between what is available and what is affordable to Maple Ridge residents. The report found that the price of a single-detached home in Maple Ridge is becoming increasingly out-of-reach for dual-income households. Additionally, with limited rental units available locally, and throughout the Metro Vancouver region, rental unit rates are increasing and also becoming a less affordable housing option.

The Housing Needs Report also highlighted Maple Ridge's limited housing diversity, as over half of the housing stock is single-detached dwellings. For seniors looking to downsize and remain in the community, there are limited options. Feedback from consultation emphasized the appeal of rancherstyle housing for seniors; however, stakeholders from the development community indicated that form of housing is land-intensive and not financially viable. The report notes that detached garden suites may provide a suitable ground-oriented option for seniors who are not interested in apartment-style living.

The findings of the Housing Needs Report continued to reaffirm the objectives and policy direction of the Official Community Plan as well as the strategies and goals within the City's Housing Action Plan.

1.5 Current Zoning Bylaw Regulations - Detached Garden Suites

The *Maple Ridge Zoning Bylaw No.* 7600-2019 regulates detached garden suites (DGS): where they can be located in the City, the size of the suite, the number of required parking spaces, private outdoor space, and where the suite can be situated on the lot. Table 2 and 3 in Appendix B summarizes the City's DGS requirements as well as the zones that currently permit a DGS.

Under current Zoning Bylaw requirements, a DGS is not allowed where there is secondary suite on the same lot. Additionally, a DGS is not permitted on the same lot where there a Bed and Breakfast, Boarding, Caretaker Residential, Temporary Residential, or Two-Unit Residential Use (i.e. duplex).

2.0 DISCUSSION:

This section outlines what allowing larger detached garden suites (DGS) could look like on a lot that is $557m^2$, and discusses how the proposed changes to the Zoning Bylaw to allow a DGS up to $140m^2$ (1,500ft²) or 15% of the lot area (whichever is less) would not impact properties within the Agricultural Land Reserve.

2.1. What We Have Heard About Detached Garden Suites in Maple Ridge

The detached garden suites (DGS) program began in 2008. Since then, approximately 64 DGSs have been constructed within Maple Ridge and 22 applications are currently instream (Appendix C).

Over the past few public consultation processes and recent development inquiries, the majority of those interested in building a DGS are families. Families are looking to leverage one property between two households, to provide attainable housing options for parents and adult children alike. Often parents have recently retired and want to remain in the family home for the next couple of years and the adult children are growing their young family and are looking to get into home ownership. The desired family housing plan is that when the parents are looking to downsize in the future, they will move into the DGS and their children and grandchildren will move into the larger family home. Families living in the same neighbourhood is becoming a less common option for young adult children as well as seniors. The Housing Needs Report (see Section 1.4 above) highlighted the limited options for seniors looking to downsize and remain in the community.

Through the public consultation and inquiries, staff have heard that being able to build a larger DGS would make the unit more livable for families who are starting out and more desirable for seniors looking to downsize from a larger home. Ultimately, allowing larger DGSs will make this form more desirable in Maple Ridge.

2.2. Example of Larger Detached Garden Suites

There are approximately 10,000 properties within the Urban Area Boundary that are currently eligible to build a detached garden suite (DGS) (Appendix D). The majority of the eligible properties are zoned either: RS-1 (Single Detached Residential), which has a minimum lot area of 668m², or RS-1b (Single Detached Medium Density Residential), which has a minimum lot size of 557m².

Currently, under the existing regulations a property that is zoned RS-1b and has a lot size of $557m^2$ (which is the minimum lot area) cannot build a DGS larger than $55m^2$ ($592ft^2$). To provide some perspective, $55m^2$ ($592ft^2$) is slightly larger than the City's requirement for an enclosed two car garage. Under the proposed changes to permit up to $140m^2$ or 15% of the lot area, whichever is less, a RS-1b lot that is $557m^2$ could potentially achieve a DGS as large as $83m^2$ ($893ft^2$).

To demonstrate the impact of the potential changes, Figure 1 illustrates two examples of current and proposed regulations using the RS-1b Zone, as the RS-1b Zone has the smallest lot area requirement that currently allows a DGS where there is a single detached house. Appendix E provides a larger visual of the current and proposed regulations.

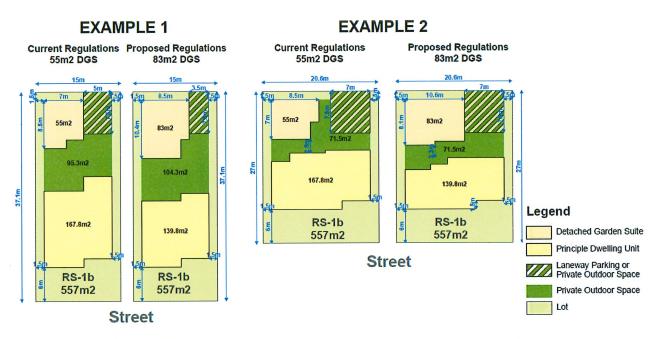


Figure 1: RS-1B Example of Current and Proposed Regulations

It should be noted that the properties that would be able to achieve the maximum proposed size of a DGS will likely be on larger lots and have the lot coverage available. For example, not every RS-1b zoned lot that is 557m² in size will be able to achieve a 83m² DGS. The application will have to meet other regulations, such as lot coverage, providing a parking space, private outdoor area, and meeting permeability requirements. Increasing the maximum size of DGSs does mean that all RS-1b zoned lots will have the opportunity to be able to build a larger DGS, which could provide more bedrooms and a more livable space.

2.3 Current Maple Ridge and Agricultural Land Reserve Regulations

Currently, the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) does not permit detached garden suites (DGS) larger than 90m² (968ft²) if the total floor area of the principal residence is 500m² (5,382ft²) or less and on a parcel less than 40 ha (99 acres). As such, the City does not permit a principal dwelling size to exceed 500m² (5,382ft²) within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), regardless of parcel size.

For larger properties, the ALC permits a detached garden suite, up to 186m² (2,002ft²), if the total floor area of the principal residence is 500m² (5,382ft²) or less and the parcel is 40 ha (99 acres) or more. There are approximately six properties in Maple Ridge that are larger than 40 hectares.

For properties within the ALR there are additional siting requirements. DGSs must be located in the rear of the property and within the Farm Home Plate.

The majority of the properties that are outside of the Urban Area Boundary are with in the ALR, which will largely not be impacted by the proposed change. The six properties that are larger than 40 ha (99 acres) could potentially be eligible for a DGS up to 140m² (1,500 ft²), which is still smaller than what is permitted by the ALC.

Should Council move forward with permitting larger DGS outside of the Urban Area Boundary, there are only approximately 1,500 properties that would be eligible for a larger DGS. The majority of these properties are zoned RS-2 (Single Detached Suburban Residential) which has a minimum lot area of 0.4 hectares.

3.0 NEXT STEPS

Should Council advance the recommendation for staff to bring forward an amendment to the Zoning Bylaw to allow detached garden suites up to 140m² (1,500 ft²) or 15% of the lot area, whichever is less, a report and draft bylaw will be brought to a future Committee of the Whole meeting and the bylaw would then process through the bylaw adoption process as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Zone Amending Bylaw Process



4.0 STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Facilitating an expansion of housing diversity and supply is identified as a Council priority, under the Liveable Community pillar, of the 2023-2026 City of Maple Ridge Council Strategic Plan. Permitting larger detached garden suites (DGS) in Maple Ridge aligns with this pillar as it encourages DGSs to have more bedrooms, more livable space, and supports housing choice in the City.

Opportunities to reduce climate impact is also identified as a Council priority in the Council Strategic Plan. Larger DGSs allow for a greater concentration of housing units where infrastructure and resources already exist as well as encourages building small homes, which reduces environmental impact in both material and energy.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The proposed work is consistent with the Official Community Plan housing policies and the Housing Action Plan. Allowing larger detached garden suites assists with executing the endorsed Housing Action Plan strategies, which was re-affirmed by the Housing Needs Report.

CONCLUSION:

From the outcomes of the Detached Garden Suite Pilot Project process, it is clear that larger detached garden suites, up to 140m² (1,500ft²) or 15% of the lot area, whichever is less, has been the most popular and desired component of the regulatory review. The larger unit component received significant community support through the public consultation process in 2017 and the Detached Garden Suite Pilot Project (2018-2020).

To date, the majority of inquiries regarding larger detached garden suites units has been from families, who are looking to leverage one property between two households in order to provide affordable housing options for parents and adult children. The Housing Needs Report emphasized Maple Ridge's limited housing diversity and noted that seniors looking who are looking to downsize and remain in the community have limited options. The Housing Needs Report noted that detached garden suites may provide a suitable ground-oriented option for seniors who are not interested in apartment-style living.

Permitting larger detached garden suites is supported by the Official Community Plan, such as Policy 3-33, which encourages housing that incorporates "age-in-place" concepts and aligns with the City's Housing Action Plan.

Should Council move the recommendation forward for staff prepare amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to permit detached garden suites up to 140m² (1,500 ft²) or 15% of the lot area, whichever is less, a report and draft bylaw will be brought to a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

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Chief Administrative Officer

The following appendices are attached hereto:

Appendix A – Work to Date for Allowing Larger DGSs

Appendix B – Current DGS Regulations and Zones

Appendix C – Number of Completed and Instream DGS Applications

Appendix D - Map of Properties Allowed to Have a DGS

Appendix E – RS-1b Example Scenarios of Larger DGS

APPENDIX A

Work to Date for Allowing Larger DGSs

With the Council endorsement of the Housing Action Plan in 2014 and the subsequent endorsement of the Plan's implementation framework in 2015, Council directed, at the August 29, 2016, Council Workshop, that the regulations for detached garden suites (DGS) be reviewed for expansion. While other work has been completed and underway since 2016, this section focuses on the work that has been undertaken regarding increasing the maximum size of DGSs in Maple Ridge.

October 3, 2017, Council Workshop

A scoping report, to seek the public's feedback on potential ways the detached garden suite regulations could be expanded, was presented at the October 3, 2017, Council Workshop. The potential DGS regulatory options for expansion were informed by industry discussions and in collaboration with other departmental staff and non-profit organisations such as Small Housing BC and the BC Tiny House Collective. Council endorsed the community engagement process outlined in the report with the intent that it will help shape the updated DGS program and a culminating pilot project proposed for 2018.

o Item 5.5 <u>https://www.mapleridge.ca/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/ 10032017-2942#page=41</u>

2017 Public Engagement Process

Public engagement commenced on November 16, 2017, with a detached garden suite stakeholder workshop, followed by a public open house on November 25, 2017.

February 6, 2018, Council Workshop

The outcomes of the 2017 public consultation were presented at Council Workshop on February 6, 2018. The report summarized resident's feedback. For example, the report noted that out of 168 survey responses, 101 (60%) of responses indicated support for larger detached garden suites, up to $140m^2$ (1,500 ft²) in gross floor area. At this Workshop meeting, Council directed staff to provide information on pilot projects to allow a DGS size to be up to $140m^2$ (1,500 ft²) or 15% of the lot area, whichever is less.

o Item 5.2: <u>https://www.mapleridge.ca/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/ 02062018-3004#page=40</u>

<u>May 1, 2018, Council Workshop</u>

At the May 1, 2018, Workshop meeting, staff outlined the steps that would be part of the Detached Garden Suite Pilot Project, which had a goal of creating tangible examples of larger detached garden suites. The steps included the creation of a Look-Book document, bylaw adoption process for text amendments, construction of the DGSs, and the engagement process. At this meeting Council directed staff to undertake the Detached Garden Suite Pilot Project.

o Item 4.4: <u>https://www.mapleridge.ca/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/ 05012018-3047#page=12</u>

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June 6, 2018, Council Workshop

To help inform Council's understanding of the proposed pilot projects a "Look-Book" document was prepared in order to provide initial conceptual DGS images of what each pilot project would look like if constructed. The Look-Book document was presented to Council at the June 6, 2018, Council Workshop. For each property, the Look-Book document contained site information, a site plan, and abstract images of future DGS units. The intent was to compile concepts and information that can be used to inform Council's decisions regarding each pilot project Zoning Bylaw amendment. Approximately 60 inquiries were received to participate in the pilot project, but only 6 were selected and formed the Look-Book. At this meeting, Council directed staff to prepare zone amending bylaws for the 6 test cases.

Item 4.2: <u>https://www.mapleridge.ca/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/ 06192018-3079#page=15</u>

June 26, 2018, Regular Council Meeting

Four Zone Amending Bylaws and Four Housing Agreement Bylaws were presented for first and second reading, one for each Pilot Project test case. Although 6 test cases were selected, only 4 were ready to move forward with the text amendment process. The content of these Bylaws were discussed in this report and attached for Council consideration. Council gave first and second reading to three of the four properties.

o Item 1112:

https://www.mapleridge.ca/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/ 06262018-3075#page=212

July 17, 2018, Public Hearing

The three Zone Amending Bylaws, one for each test case property, were presented for public comment. Only one person provided comment at the public hearing, which was one of the property owners participating in the project. The property owner expressed excited about the project and also expressed appreciation to Council for their consideration.

Item 4: <u>https://www.mapleridge.ca/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_07172018-3083#page=4</u>

July 24, 2018, Regular Council

The three Zone Amending Bylaws and Four Housing Agreement Bylaws, one for each test case property, were presented for third and final reading. Council granted third and final reading for each zone amending bylaw.

o Item 1004:

https://www.mapleridge.ca/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/ 07242018-3089#page=5



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Remainder of 2018 and 2019

For the remainder of 2018 and throughout 2019, staff from the planning, building, and engineering departments worked with property owners to construct their detached garden suites.

February 2020

The public engagement process launched, which included three tour events for the registered attendees at three detached garden suites locations.

April 14, 2020, Council Workshop

The Detached Garden Suite Pilot Project outcomes were presented to Council at the April 14, 2020, Workshop. This report provided an outline of the Pilot Project process and feedback received from the DGS Pilot. Feedback included the project property owners experience through the building permit process and learnings on the City side.

As part of the Detached Garden Suite Pilot Project, a tour of DGS was conduced along with a survey. The Survey generated 96 responses. When asked if respondents support allowing DGSs to be up to 140m² (1,500 ft²) in gross floor area, 94% of respondents indicated yes to supporting units up to this size.

The pilot project also identified the following cost benefits to the property owner building a larger DGS:

- Provision of water, sanitary, electrical, etc. on the site is the same cost regardless of the size of unit being constructed;
- Foundations are a relatively fixed cost regardless of the size of unit being constructed, as the price will not vary much from a 500ft² unit to a 1,000ft² unit; and
- General contractors are less likely to schedule a small construction project (particularly a small DGS unit) over a larger construction project and as such, a premium may be charged in situations where a contractor is willing to take on a small DGS project.

For the families that constructed a detached garden suite as part of the pilot, their reasoning for constructing a detached garden suite was to keep their family close, and it was the most affordable option for both families living in the principal and accessory dwelling. To date there have been no complaints received regarding the properties that took part in the Detached Garden Suite Pilot Project.

The learnings on staff end prompted the creation of an "Online Help Tool" to assist property owners undertaking small development projects. The online tool was launched in April 2021.

 Item 4.2: <u>https://www.mapleridge.ca/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/ 04142020-</u> 3427#page=9

APPENDIX B

Appendix B outlines some of the current regulations for detached garden suites (Table 2) and a list of zones that currently allowed a detached garden suites as an accessory residential use (Table 3). For all regulations please refer to the City of Maple Ridge Zoning Bylaw No. 7600-2019.

Table 2: Current Detached Garden Suites Regulations

REGULATORY REQUIREMENT	DETACHED GARDEN SUITES	
Permitted Location	Single Detached zones that have a minimum lot size of 557m ² (See Table 3 for complete list of zones)	
Minimum Floor Area	N/A	
Maximum Floor Area	90m ² or 10% of the lot area (whichever is less)	
# Permitted Per Lot	One	
Primary Dwelling Association	In rear yard	
# of Storeys	For Lots less than 0.4 hectares, the detached garden suite must be one storey at ground level;	
	For Lots with Lane access or are larger than 0.4 hectares, the detached garden suite may be located on the second storey of an Accessory Residential Use (ex. garage) or an Off-Street Parking Use.	
Private Outdoor	Cannot be less than 25% of the Gross Floor Area of the detached	
Requirement	garden suite or 10% of the total Lot Area, whichever is less	
Parking Requirement	One per unit	
Strata Title	Not permitted	
Floodplain Requirement	Suite must be above Flood Construction Level	
Septic Site Requirement	Must notify Fraser Health Authority if Lot is not serviced by Community Sanitary Sewer System	
Farm Home Plate Requirement	Must be located within the Farm Home Plate	

SHORT FORM	ZONE DESIGNATION	MINIMUM LOT SIZE
A-1	Small Holding Agricultural	2.0 hectares
A-2	Upland Agricultural	4.0 hectares
A-3	Extensive Agricultural	8.0 hectares
A-4	Intensive Greenhouse	1.8 hectares
RS-1	Single Detached Residential	668.0 square metres
RS-1a	Single Detached (Amenity) Residential	668.0 square metres
RS-1b	Single Detached (Medium Density) Residential	557.0 square metres
RS-1c	Single Detached (Low Density) Residential	1,200.0 square metres
RS-1d	Single Detached (Half Acre) Residential	2000.0 square metres
RS-2	Single Detached Suburban Residential	0.4 hectares (4000.0 square metres)
RS-3	Single Detached Rural Residential	0.8 hectares (8000.0 square metres)
SRS	Special Urban Residential	837.0 square metres

Table 3: Zones that Currently Allow Detached Garden Suites and Minimum Lot Size

APPENDIX C

Appendix C provides a bar chart of the number of applications to constructed a detached garden suite. The blue bar shows the number of completed applications and the red bar shows the number of applications instream. The date shown on the chart is when the application was received.

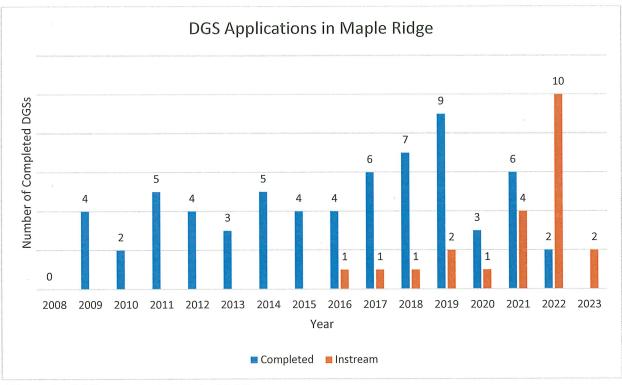


Figure 3: Number of Completed and Instream DGS Applications

^{*}Note: the DGS program began in 2008

