



Additional Residential Units (ARU)

ARE ARU'S FOR YOU?

Can I have an Additional Residential Unit (ARU)? Without a doubt this is a trending topic within the Town of The Blue Mountains. However, navigating the Zoning By-law, the Official Plan, the Planning Act, and the Ontario Building Code to bring an ARU to fruition may seem like a daunting and somewhat intimidating process. The Town's Building Services staff are here to assure you that you are not alone, to provide guidance, or at least some insightful reading, and to get you involved and excited about supporting our community. Let's get started.

What is an ARU?

An ARU is an Additional Residential Unit. Previously defined within the Town as an Accessory Apartment Unit, an ARU means a legally constructed permanent or semi-permanent dwelling unit that can safely accommodate residents on a year-round basis.

Why an ARU?

In November 2022, the Government of Ontario passed Bill 23 – The More Homes Built Faster plan. This plan aims to support the province's goal of adding 1.5 million new homes in Ontario by 2031. The intent of the plan is to facilitate small scale residential development, and the intensification of permitted dwelling units per lot.

Building on several "as of right" residential tools which Ontario has provided municipalities with since 2019, the government is changing the Planning Act to create a new province wide standard threshold for what is permitted to be built by strengthening the additional dwelling unit framework. With the *More Homes Built Faster* plan, up to three residential units may be permitted "as of right" on most land zoned for a dwelling in residential areas without needing a municipal By-law or Official Plan amendment. Depending on the property, these three units could all be within the existing dwelling or could take the form of a residence within a detached structure. These new units must be compliant with the Ontario Building Code and municipal By-laws.

Who Can Have an ARU?

Any property within the Town of The Blue Mountains that allows for a Residential Use as a Permitted Use as per the Town's Zoning By-law 2018-65 can have an ARU. However, where your property is located within the Town may determine the scope of what is permitted. Residential parcels within the Town of The Blue Mountains are either considered Urban or Rural as per the Official Plan and supported by the Planning Act. Additionally, there may be further restrictions for lots designated under the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP). Please review clause c) if your property is in a designated NEP area.

Let's elaborate.

1. Urban Parcels: A parcel of urban residential land is a parcel of land that is within an area of settlement on which residential use is permitted by By-law and that is serviced by municipal sewage works, as well as a municipal drinking water system. Does this sound like your property? If so, great! Read on. If not, please review clause b).

Urban residential properties allow for up to three residential units. One of which shall remain as the primary residential unit. An ARU may occupy any floor of the main dwelling structure and/or a maximum

of one ARU is permitted within a detached structure. Each residential unit shall contain a separate living space which includes a kitchen, a bathroom, a sleeping area, have access to laundry facilities, and be located on the same property as the primary residential unit.

2. Rural Parcels: A parcel of rural residential land is a parcel of land that is within an area of settlement on which residential use is permitted by By-law and that is not serviced by municipal sewage works, as well as a municipal drinking water system.
3. Rural residential properties allow for up to two residential units. One of which shall remain as the primary residential unit. An ARU may occupy any floor within the main building. Alternatively, one ARU is permitted within a detached structure. An ARU in a detached structure on a rural parcel of land shall be located no more than 50 metres from the primary residential unit.
4. Notwithstanding the above, on lots designated under the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP), a maximum of one ARU is permitted and shall be located within the main building. Further inquiries in relation to this NEP policy should be directed to the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

Where can I Locate an ARU on my Property?

Within the main building: As per the Town's Zoning By-law 2018-65, ARU's within the main building cannot have more than two bedrooms per unit. The maximum floor area per ARU shall not exceed 50% of the primary residential unit or 100 square metres, whichever is greater.

In addition, on lots designated under the Niagara Escarpment Plan, the maximum gross floor area shall be less than that of the primary residential unit.

Within a detached accessory building: As per the Town's Zoning By-law 2018-65, an ARU within a detached accessory building shall contain no more than two bedrooms. Additionally, the detached building in which the ARU is located shall have a minimum rear yard setback of 1.2 metres. However, all other required yards shall comply with the yard setbacks applicable to the primary residential unit. The maximum height for an ARU in a detached accessory building is 5 metres, except where the ARU is located above another accessory use, in which case the maximum height shall be 8 metres. An ARU in a detached accessory building is permitted to exceed the lot coverage applicable to accessory buildings by 5% per ARU. And the ARU shall be located within 50 metres of the main building.

Feeling inspired? Here are a few frequent Q & A's regarding ARU's in the Town of The Blue Mountains.

Q: Can I rent out my primary residential unit and my ARU's?

A: Yes! The primary residential unit including any ARU's may be rented for long term rental. Meaning periods longer than 30 consecutive days. A Short-Term Accommodation (STA) is not a permitted Residential Use.

Q: Are ARU's exempt from Development Charges?

A: Yes! Currently, ARU's are exempt from Town and County Development Charges.

Q: Everything looks great! What is my next step?

A: You will require a Building Permit from the Town. You can find the ARU Permit Guide on the Town's website [here](#).

Q: Where can I find more information about ARU's?

A: To learn more, please visit Additional Residential Units, consult the Town's Zoning By-law, or contact the Town of The Blue Mountains, Building Services Division at 519-599-3131 ext. 290.