



To: Mayor and Council  
 From: Kerry Costello, Director of Corporate Services/Clerk  
 Date: October 12, 2022  
 Committee of the Whole Date: October 17, 2022  
 Title: Housing Advisory Committee Final Report

For Direction  
 For Information  
 For Adoption  
 Attachment 23 pages

**Recommendation:** THAT the Final Report by the Housing Advisory Committee dated October 2022 be formally received by Council.

**Purpose:** To fulfill the deliverable established in the Terms of Reference for the Housing Advisory Committee to present a final report that provides Council with a consolidated document that addresses all 17 recommendations and how this committee, staff members and Council have implemented them.

**Background:** The current Elected Officials prioritized the establishment of a Housing Task Force in their 2019-2022 Strategic Plan as a means of identifying priority short term and longer-term objectives and implementation strategies aimed at advancing affordable housing availability and options for the residents of the Town of Smiths Falls.

On December 21, 2021, Council adopted the Housing Report that the Task Force prepared as well as the 17 recommendations that were contained in the report. The Housing Advisory Committee was established to oversee and assist in the coordinating, fulfillment and implementation of the 17 recommendations set out in the Housing Report.

**Analysis and Options:** With the re-establishment of new committees to coincide with the upcoming term of Council, Council will have the opportunity to determine how to best monitor and guide the ongoing recommendations of this Committee.

**Budget/Financial Implications:** N/A

**Link to Strategic Plan:** Strategic Priority#1 - Housing

**Existing Policy:** Resolution 2020-12-268 (Adopting the Housing Task Force Final Report)

**Consultations:** Housing Advisory Committee Members

**Attachments:** Final Report: Housing Advisory Committee, October 2022

Respectfully Submitted:

Reviewed for Agenda by:

Kerry Costello,  
 Director of Corporate Services/Clerk

Malcolm Morris, CMO  
 Chief Administrative Officer



# FINAL REPORT HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Prepared October 2022

## INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE

*Housing is one of the most fundamental of human needs. It is also a key driver shaping the economic and social sustainability of communities, a vehicle for social inclusion and an important component of growth.*

*Access to safe, affordable and adequate housing touches almost every aspect of a community's well-being and affects all of its members. Communities with a range of housing choices that meet the full range of their housing needs - including the needs of low- and moderate-income citizens - are generally more livable, more economically competitive and resilient. A growing body of research shows that access to good quality affordable housing supports not only low- and moderate-income households, but also has positive community-wide benefits related to economic competitiveness, health, education and community well-being.<sup>1</sup>*

The establishment of a Housing Task Force was prioritized by the current Elected Officials in their 2019-2022 Strategic Plan as a means of identifying priority short term and longer-term objectives and implementation strategies aimed at advancing affordable housing availability and options for the residents of the Town of Smiths Falls.

On December 21, 2021 Council adopted the Housing Report that the Task Force prepared as well as the 17 recommendations that were contained in the report. The final recommendation in that report was the first recommendation to be implemented and fulfilled.

Recommendation #17	That Council appoint a Housing Advisory Committee to oversee and assist on implementing the recommendations of the Task Force
Priority: Immediate	Champion: Clerk/Corporate Services
Implementation considerations:	As per terms of reference to be drafted.
<b>STATUS</b>	<b>COMPLETED</b>

The Housing Advisory Committee was established to oversee and assist in the coordinating, fulfillment and implementation of the 17 recommendations set out in the Housing Report.

The Scope of Work for the Housing Advisory Committee was:

- Review the Housing Report, dated November, 2020 (and adopted by Council on December 21, 2020) as prepared by the Smiths Falls Housing Task Force
- Understand the Municipal government’s current approaches to increasing access to affordable housing, including the review of applicable Smiths Falls Official Plan policies and Zoning By-Law provisions
- Establish a process to engage and consult the public on matters relating to housing, including hosting of community development and educational sessions. The Committee will consult with business, construction and community groups. The Committee will also seek input from a broad cross section of the community with a variety of lived experiences seeking housing in the municipality, such as seniors, students, vulnerable populations, immigrants, and young professionals.
- Act as a commenting body to review new and updated bylaws/policies that are to be implemented as a result of the Housing Report
- Assist staff with fulfilling, coordinating and implementing the recommendations contained in the Housing Report.

This final report from the Committee will provide Council with a consolidated document that addresses all 17 recommendations and how they have been implemented by this committee, staff members and Council.

## **CURRENT STATISTICS**

In 2021, the enumerated population of Smiths Falls, Town (CSD) was 9,254, which represents a change of 5.4% from 2016. This compares to the provincial average of 5.8% and the national average of 5.2%.

In 2021, there were 4,311 private dwellings occupied in Smiths Falls, which represent a change of 6.0% from 2016. In 2021, there were 4,310 households in Smiths Falls with a homeownership rate of 54.8%. This rate changed by -2.6 percentage points from 2016.

<b>Housing tenure for all households Smiths Falls, Lanark (CTY), Ontario, Canada, 2021</b>					
<b>Housing Tenure</b>	<b>Smiths Falls</b>		<b>Lanark (CTY)</b>	<b>Ontario</b>	<b>Canada</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Total households	4,310	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Owner	2,360	54.8	78.4	68.4	66.5
Renter	1,955	45.4	21.6	31.4	33.1
Dwelling provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band	0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.5

\*\* Statistics Canada website

## **POLICY AND REGULATIONS**

### **Zoning By-law Changes and Updates**

The Town's Zoning By-law is the primary planning tool in place that regulates land use and development. It is prescriptive and detailed. The Zoning By-law implements the policy based Official Plan, which articulates Council's overall vision for the growth and development of the municipality.

The Task Force identified several opportunities for zoning changes to promote the objectives of this Plan and recommends these approaches be considered and implemented in the upcoming zoning review.

### **Parking Requirements**

Minimum parking requirements effectively cap the size of residential development downtown and in other areas where land is scarce. Paved parking is also expensive to construct. Zoning by-laws require minimum parking in order to provide enough for residents, visitors and relieve remove parking pressures on the street. Parking requirements are standard in zoning by-laws and tend to range between 1 and 1.25 in comparator municipalities. Most multi-residential development in Smiths Falls requires 1.25 parking spaces per unit, as per the former Zoning By-law.

Recommendation	Reduce parking requirements for large and/or small scale projects.
<b>STATUS</b>	<b>COMPLETED- New ZBL approved by Council on August 22 that incorporates a reduction in parking requirements for new multi-residential projects.</b>

### **Secondary Dwellings**

The Zoning By-law currently allows homeowners to create an accessory apartment within a single detached dwelling (which usually ends up in the basement). Recent changes to the *Planning Act* require municipalities to continue to allow accessory apartments (including in rowhouses and semi-detached) and also in detached structures. Detached accessory dwellings can be referred to as “coach houses”, “tiny homes”, “granny flats”, etc., however those terms are tricky to use as legal definitions since they can mean different things to different people.

Recommendation	Allow secondary dwelling units in semi-detached and row house dwellings as well as detached.
<b>STATUS</b>	<b>COMPLETED – Council adopted new Additional Residential Unit (ARU) policies in December 2021. New ZBL approved by Council on August 22 carried forward the ARU requirements, with minor tweaks to further facilitate detached ARUs.</b>

### **Minimum Dwelling Size**

Minimum dwelling size requirements are common in zoning by-laws; however, some municipalities are either reducing or removing these requirements. These provisions are often in place to establish a consistent development profile for an area and also provide what is perceived to be adequate living space for residents. The Task Force recognized that minimum dwelling size requirements are a barrier to creating affordable housing options as well as flexibility to accommodate a variety of needs.

Recommendation	Reduce the minimum dwelling size requirements for single family homes, apartment units and other forms of housing.
<b>STATUS</b>	<b>COMPLETED- Zoning By-law approved by Council August 22. Minimum dwelling size requirements for residential units removed.</b>

### **Minimum Lot Size**

Minimum lot sizes are usually used to establish and confirm a consistent development character for a neighbourhood. Current minimum lot size requirements in the Zoning By-law accommodates development at a lower density than what is envisioned in the newer Official Plan. Smaller lots yield more units per hectare and can lower costs for home purchasers. The Task Force recognized that smaller lot sizes encourage development that provides affordable options and reduces the number of variances required to accommodate gentle infill.

Recommendation	Reduce the minimum lot size in all residential zones but ensuring there is park/green space.
<b>STATUS</b>	<b>COMPLETED- Zoning By-law approved by Council August 22. In consultation with PAC, modest changes to lot sizes were accommodated.</b>

### **Mixed Use Zoning**

Mixed use zoning allows various land uses to be combined within a single development or district and can create new housing opportunities in areas where such opportunities may have previously not existed. Mixed use developments can promote housing diversity, social inclusiveness and more compact, walkable neighbourhoods that are integrated with commercial and service uses. It also has the potential for offering cost savings to developers in the form of shared parking arrangements and shared costs for building operation and maintenance. Many cities and towns are considering the long-term future of established shopping areas by investigating allowing residential development to complement the original use and support the long-term sustainability of the commercial development.

Recommendation	Allow provisions to accommodate mixed use development in shopping centre zones.
<b>STATUS</b>	<b>No change – subject to future Official Plan update.</b>

Recommendation	Investigate zoning changes to allow ground floor residential development in certain circumstances in the downtown core.
STATUS	COMPLETED- Zoning By-law approved by Council August 22. Ground floor rear and side facing residential units now allowed.

**Pre-Zoning for Density**

There is very little vacant land in the Town that is ‘pre-zoned’ for higher density residential development. Most lands zoned for higher density (apartment and townhouse development) are already developed. Almost all single-family dwelling neighbourhoods north of the Rideau are zoned R4 (1994 ZBL), which allow duplexes, semi detached and “converted dwellings” and most single-family residential neighbourhoods in the southern half of the town are zoned R1, which only allow singles. The Official Plan supports targeted, compatible and gentle intensification. Pre-zoning lands for medium density housing at strategic locations (i.e. along collector roads) will provide certainty for developers and catalyze infill.

Recommendation	Amend zoning to allow semi-detached, duplex and townhouse dwellings along collector roads.
STATUS	COMPLETED- Zoning By-law approved by Council August 22. New R2 Zoning applied along collector roads allowing semi, duplex and triplex dwellings as-of-right. The R2 Zone is the successor to the previous R4 Zone.

**Town Lands Policies**

The Town of Smiths Falls owns several vacant developable lots, which have been acquired in various ways over many decades. While the Town does not envision itself as a developer, it has from time to time received and solicited bids from developers who are interested in acquiring municipal land and developing it. This gives Council, as the property owner, a greater degree of say over the timing of development and the type of development to ensure the best interests of the community and taxpayers at large are met.

The process of land sales and development are guided by a By-law to Regulate the Sale of Municipally Owned Real Property which, among other items, establishes evaluation criteria by which Council considers multiple bids. Economic impact and employment opportunities created are currently considered primary criteria in considering the sale of municipal land. The Task Force believes that the Town can play an integral role with encouraging affordable housing and recommend that Council amends the applicable by-laws and policies to emphasize this.

Recommendation	Amend municipal land sale by-law and implementing policies to prioritize housing as a criteria in considering the sale of municipal land.
STATUS	Presentation by staff revealed that there is not a lot of town owned land suitable for development. Committee recommended bringing forward the land sale bylaw to a future Committee of the Whole.

Recommendation	Create and publicise a listing of Town owned land that is reasonably available for residential development.
STATUS	List presented on April 27, 2022. Unfortunately, few suitable properties appear available and easy to potentially develop. Longer term strategic planning for residential development will need to occur.

The Town did strategically vest a property zoned for multi-residential development and have entered into the Memorandum of Understanding with Carebridge Community Support for the development of this property for affordable housing.

**Property Standards**

The Town has a Property Standards Bylaw and a Yards Bylaw which set out the minimum standards for building and property maintenance within the town. Standards prescribed in these bylaws are intended to outline the reasonable maintenance and upkeep of yards, buildings and properties. This recommendation aligns with two of Council’s Strategic Priorities - Housing and Quality of Life. All property owners are required to repair and maintain their property including owners of properties that are rented out.

The Municipal Act, 2001 permits municipalities to pass by-laws. These by-laws allow the municipality to enter onto your land at any reasonable time without a warrant for the purposes of investigating alleged by-law infractions or determining compliance with orders. The major caveat to this broad right-of-entry power is that an officer shall not enter a room or place being used as a dwelling without permission or a warrant.

Recommendation	Review of the Town’s property standards and yards by-laws and investigate amendments to ensure that landlords can be held more accountable for meeting the “standards” for their property. Review level of enforcement.
STATUS	2 Full time bylaw enforcement officer recruited. New Yards Bylaw and Property Standards Bylaw presented for public feedback. Items like mold/insects added in the draft for Council’s review and approval. Some public information pieces to be prepared. Updated bylaw to be presented to the new Council.

## PROGRAMS AND INCENTIVES

### Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan

Section 28 of the *Planning Act* gives municipalities the ability to prepare community improvement plans. Community improvement plans (CIPs) are intended to encourage rehabilitation initiatives and/or stimulate development. A community improvement approach is a flexible, comprehensive, co-ordinated and strategic framework for dealing with lands and buildings to address a physical, social, economic or environmental need. Through CIPs, municipalities can:

- focus public attention on local priorities and municipal initiatives;
- target areas in transition or in need of repair, rehabilitation and redevelopment;
- facilitate and encourage community change in a coordinated manner; and
- stimulate private sector investment through municipal incentive-based programs

Community improvement plans typically feature **incentive-based programs (grant, loan and property tax assistance)** that are targeted and focussed to improve the living and working conditions in the community and achieve public benefits that result in more socially cohesive, environmentally friendly and economically sound communities. In 2015 the Town's first Community Improvement Plan came into effect in the downtown core, which included four municipal incentive programs to support development and redevelopment projects in this area.

The *Planning Act* and Official Plan do not limit the Town to one community improvement plan and indeed several other municipalities around Ontario have created CIP programs to support affordable housing in addition to existing area-specific ones. An affordable housing CIP that covers the entire municipality can co-exist with the existing downtown CIP and offer a separate program to achieve what is ultimately a different objective.

The objectives can be achieved in a few ways:

- Affordable housing development loan program
- Additional residential unit (secondary dwelling) loan program
- Affordable unit grant programs (up to a set maximum)
- Tax increment grant programs (rebating portions of increased assessments)
- Planning and building fee rebates
- Feasibility study rebates
- Development charges rebate program

Recommendation	Develop and implement an affordable housing community improvement plan
<b>STATUS</b>	<b>New CIP under development that includes programs supporting attainable and accessible housing across the town, as well as retaining downtown specific incentive policies. Open house held for draft CIP and staff and public feedback has been provided to consultants to refine. Statutory public meeting for draft CIP held on October 11, with Council adopting the plan by bylaw.</b>

## AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

### Residential Development Information Guide

The Task Force identified education, for both the housing providers and residents as essential in building a resilient and sustainable residential community. Town staff, particularly in Building and Planning Services, as well as other departments work closely with residential developers from the planning to occupancy stages of their construction. Many developers are new developers, or new to Smiths Falls. The Task Force identified the value of a residential “development information guide” to be provided and shared with developers of rental housing at the time of construction. This guide would communicate the Town’s appreciation for the investment in the community and will provide important information and supports and resources.

Recommendation	Develop and distribute a Residential Development Information Guide to provide information and support to rental housing developers.
<b>STATUS</b>	<b>COMPLETED- Additional Residential Unit guide completed in August 2022. Guide shared with the Committee for distribution. Guide also posted on Speak Up Smiths Falls. Guide not posted on website at this time due to website outage.</b>

### Tenant Workshops and Education

In consultation with the community and stakeholders, the Task Force had learned that knowledge gaps relating to rights and responsibilities have led to conflict between landlords and tenants and in many cases tenants may not know their rights under provincial legislation. Other communities in our area have periodically hosted workshops or legal clinics to help educate renters on their legal rights. Providing this service in Smiths Falls, ideally on an annual basis, would assist in empowering residents and enhancing the community-wide base of knowledge on housing issues.

The Task Force recognized the necessity of including landlords, especially smaller scale landlords as part of the discussion and outreach, recognizing that they may also not know the rules. As a point to consider, in creating affordable housing in Town (and ideally, fair and equitable opportunities for accessing housing for all), it is important to build a system that is supportive, inclusive and not overly burdensome. Workshops designed to ensure inclusivity, free of charge and not overly burdensome for citizens who are already stressed about income/housing.

Recommendation	The Town will coordinate the hosting of legal clinics or workshops to help inform tenants, renters as well as smaller scale landlords on their legal rights within the housing context.
<b>STATUS</b>	<b>Successful virtual workshop regarding Tenants Rights held October 1, 2021. Housing Advisory Committee would like to see this as an annual event.</b>

In a competitive housing market, the Task Force appreciated that entering the housing market is often the first and foremost challenge for young people, people with different abilities and those who have undergone significant challenges in their lives. Once securely housed, citizens find it easier to secure employment and participate more fully in their community. The development of soft skills and tips for new renters to assist them in making that best first impression is very important. This includes electronic etiquette, good references and pet etiquette.

Recommendation	The Town to assist in the coordination of an educational session to assist potential new renters/tenants on skill enhancement.
<b>STATUS</b>	<b>Housing Advisory Committee would like to see an annual event.</b>

### **Developing Partnerships with Not-For-Profit Organizations**

In recent years, most housing supply in Smiths Falls has been provided by the private sector on a for-profit basis. The Task Force gratefully appreciates the investment that our local development community has made to house our residents and provide what is predominantly good quality housing. The not-for-profit sector targets a different market within the community and these organizations can be a major partner in alleviating the housing and affordability pressures in the Town on a larger scale. At present, social housing is provided by Lanark County Housing, however at this time we cannot assume that this supply will be expanded in the coming years.

In recent years, several not-for-profit organizations have contacted the Town with interest in developing affordable housing on different properties, including lands owned by the Town. These include smaller one- and two-unit developments as well as larger projects. While this outreach is always welcomed, there is no guiding strategic policy that establishes how we could best leverage partnerships with these organizations to create housing opportunities.

Recommendation	Council supports and prioritizes the development of partnerships with not-for-profit organizations in recognition of their role in creating affordable housing supply within the Town.
<b>STATUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Partnership with Carebridge Community Support for units on Robinson Avenue.</b></li> <li>● <b>Carebridge Community Support project at 44 Chambers that resulted from a unified effort between the Town, Carebridge and Lanark County</b></li> </ul>

The Task Force also recognizes the importance of building relationships with other established providers such as Lanark County Housing.

Recommendation	The Town meets on an annual basis with Lanark County Housing to address and plan for affordable housing priorities within the Town.
<b>STATUS</b>	County held a stakeholder engagement sessions to receive initial input on potential tools, incentives, and other actions to encourage the development of this type of housing. SHS Consulting and WSP staff facilitated. K Grenke and K Costello attended. K Grenke provided input from Smiths Falls,

\*\* The Town has been invited by Lanark County Housing to join/sit on the Housing Coalition to receive legislative updates and changes happening in this sector.

**MOVING THIS PLAN FORWARD**

With the re-establishment of new committees to coincide with the upcoming term of Council, Council will have the opportunity to determine how to best monitor and guide the ongoing recommendations of this Committee.

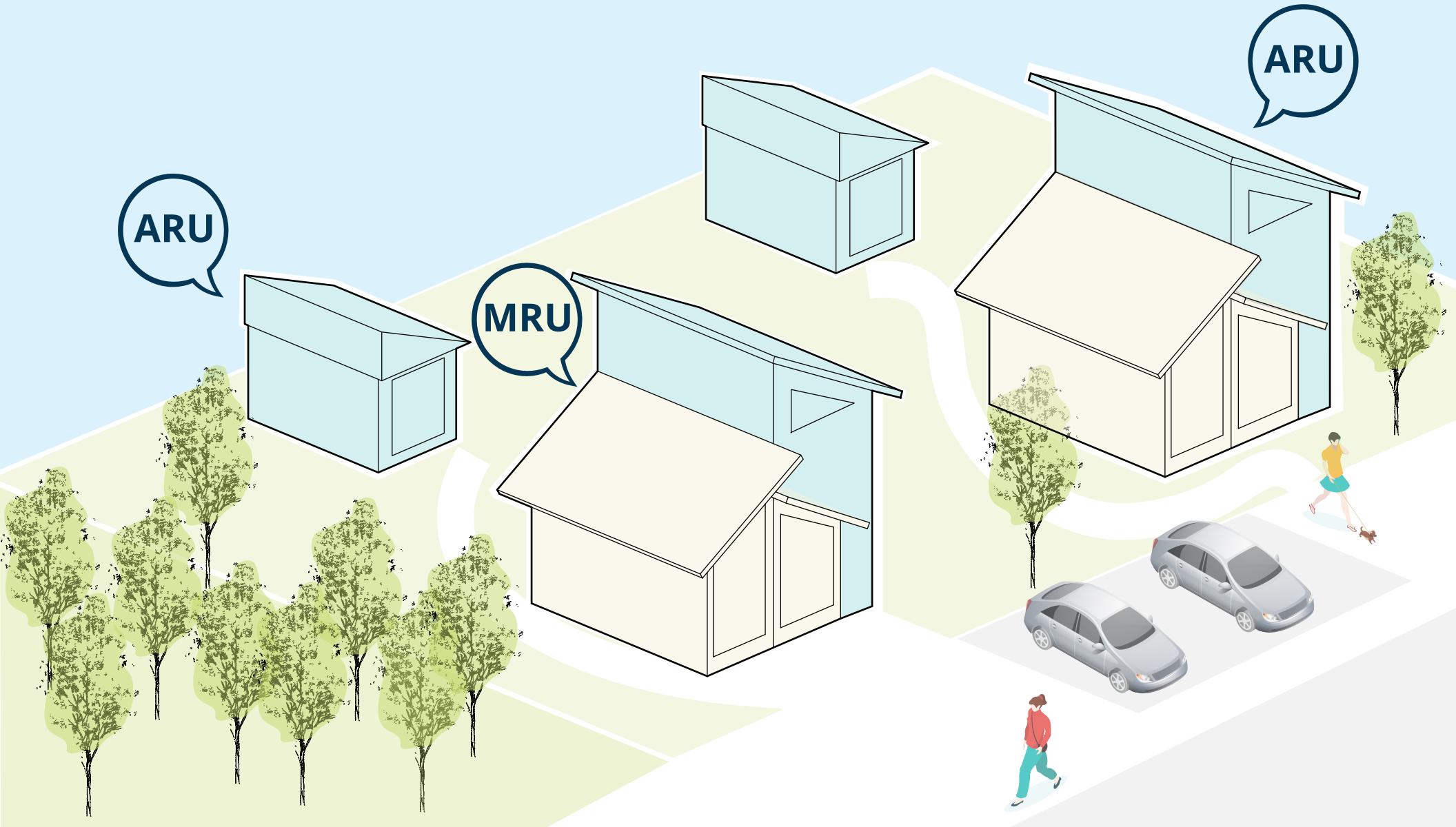
**APPENDICES**

Additional Residential Unit Guide



# Additional Residential Unit (ARU)

## A Guide To Adding More Units To Your Home



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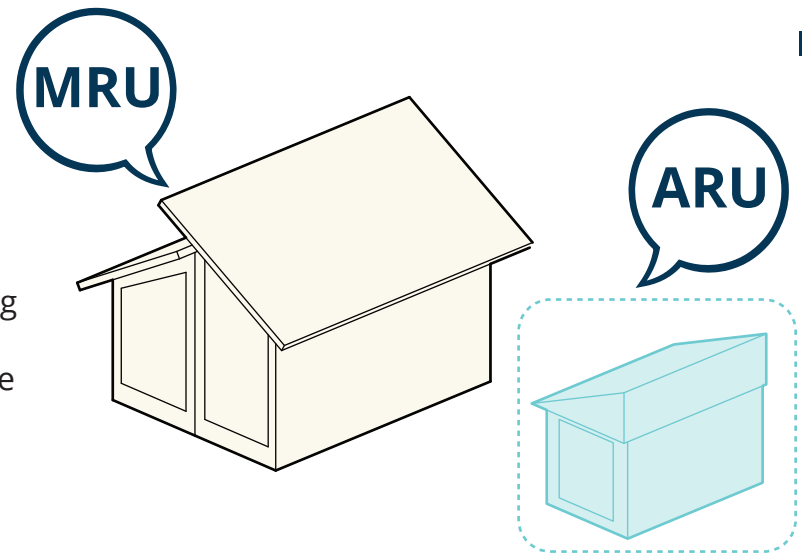
## Disclaimer:

This is a Guideline for the establishing of Additional Residential Units in accordance with the Zoning By-law, which has been prepared for convenience purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained herein, reference should be made to the original By-law and all amendments thereto for legal purposes.



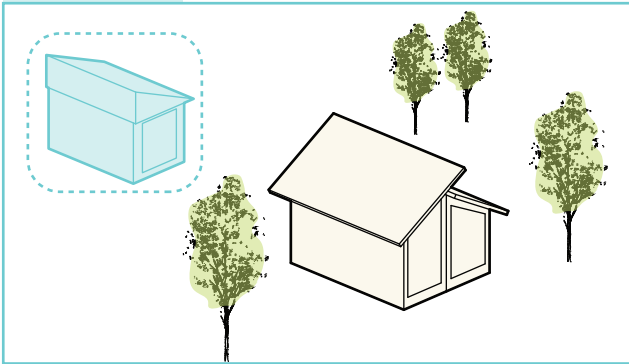
# What Is An Additional Residential Unit? (ARU)

An **Additional Residential Unit (ARU)** is a type of dwelling unit secondary to the **Main Residential Unit (MRU)** located on the same lot. An ARU is permitted within single detached, semi-detached, or townhouse dwellings. ARUs contain a private kitchen, bathroom facilities, and sleeping areas. They may be constructed inside an existing house, as an addition, or as a detached residential structure accessed through a private entrance outside the **Main Residential Unit**.

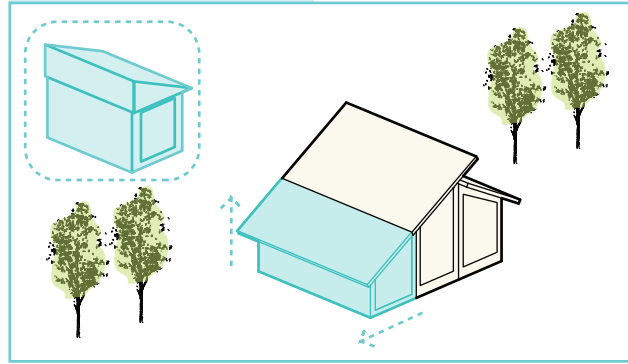


## Different Forms Of Additional Residential Unit

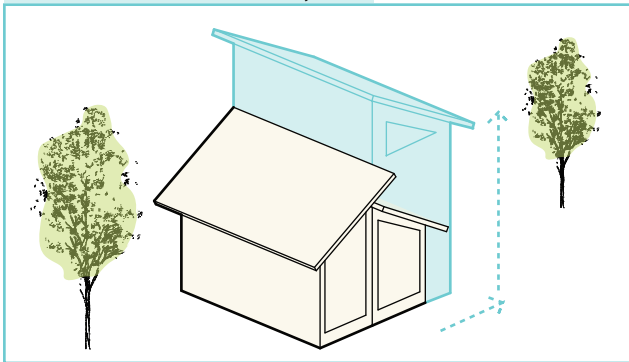
1. Detached ARU



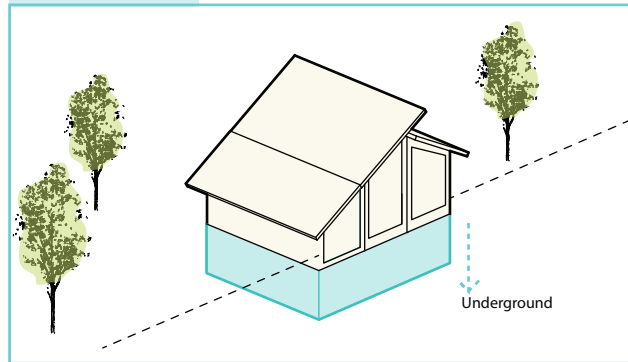
2. Attached & Detached ARU





3. Attached With Second-Story ARU



4. Basement ARU



-  Main Residential Unit (MRU)
-  Additional Residential Unit (ARU)



## Benefits Of Additional Residential Units



Provides additional income for homeowners



Supports services in the community with additional population



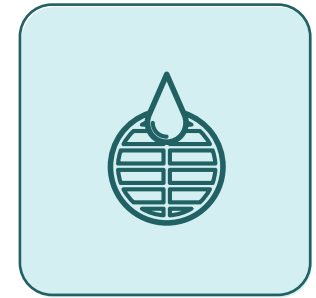
Increases the rental housing supply



Provides flexible housing options for friends and family



Creates a more diverse mix of housing types



Makes use of existing water and sewer infrastructure

## General Requirements For Additional Residential Units

1. Additional Residential Units are permitted in:
  - Single-detached dwellings
  - Semi-detached dwellings
  - Row-house (townhouse) dwellings
2. The Zoning By-law limits the number of ARUs to a maximum of one (1) within the MRU and one (1) detached from the MRU within the lot's boundaries.
3. ARUs are required to receive an Occupancy Permit through the Building Permit process, which is given only if the unit meets the Ontario Building Code and Fire Code requirements.
4. ARUs require adequate water and sewer capacity to support them. This is often demonstrated through a servicing brief.

*Note: See page 7 for information on how to find your lot's zone-specific requirements.*

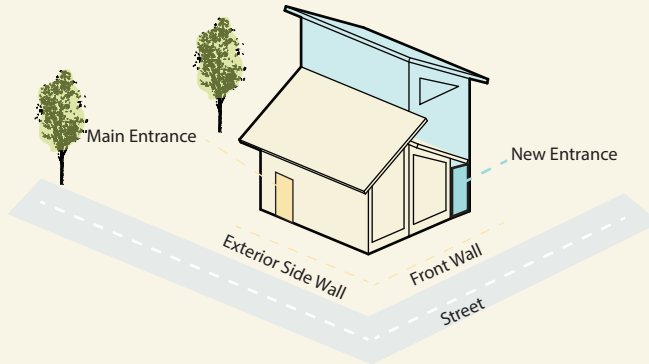
5. An ARU must maintain the height and yard setbacks of the MRU zone.
6. An ARU cannot have any windows facing the rear lot line of the property if the ARU is within the required rear yard setback of the zone for the MRU.
7. An ARU needs to maintain the landscaped open space for the property's zone.
8. An ARU cannot to exceed 40% of the floor area of the MRU. However, if the ARU is located in a basement, it can occupy the whole of the basement regardless of the floor area.





9. A separate entrance is required for the ARU.  
The entrance can:

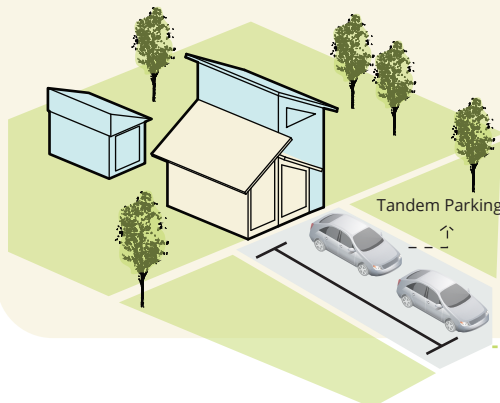
- Share an existing entrance at the front of the MRU. (access through common vestibules) or;
- through a new door at the side of the MRU or;



- through a new door at the front wall if the existing entry is on an exterior side wall or;
- through an exterior path or rear lane if the ARU is detached from the MRU.

10. The MRU and the ARU must share the existing driveway and yards.

- One dedicated parking space must be provided for each Main Residential Unit and Additional Residential Units



**Q:** Why are additional entrances not permitted at the front of the MRU?

**A:** A second entrance on the front of the house could alter the community's character since most homes have only one door facing the street. Further, lot widths of semi-detached dwellings and townhouse dwellings may be too narrow to accommodate a second entrance on the front of the house.

**Q:** Why do we need to keep green space on the lot?

**A:** Landscaped open space is required in order to naturally mitigate stormwater and drainage on site and also provide landscaping and amenity space for natural cooling and enhance the quality of life for residents.

**Q:** Can I use my garage as a dwelling unit?

**A:** Yes, if all required parking spaces can be provided on-site and the required setbacks are achieved. A garage conversion is subject to a building permit under the Ontario Building Code.

**Q:** Can I widen my driveway?

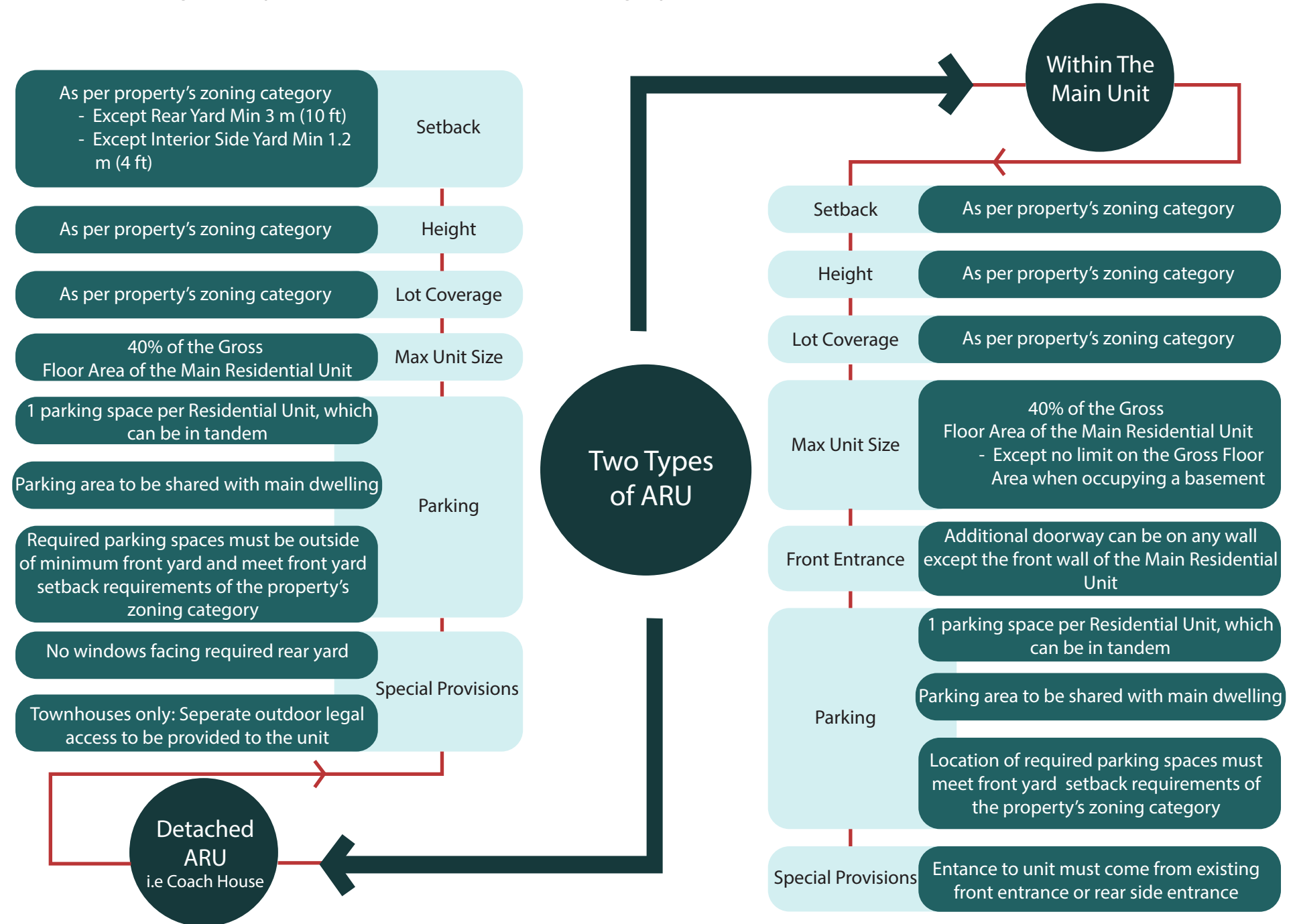
**A:** Yes, you can widen your driveway. The Zoning By-law prescribes a maximum of 9m width or 60% of the lot frontage whichever is less, for a driveway. Keep in mind that required parking spaces need to meet front yard setbacks for the Main Residential Unit. Widening a driveway may also require an entrance permit from the department of Public Works and Utilities.



# What Type of ARU do I Qualify For & What Are Its Requirements?

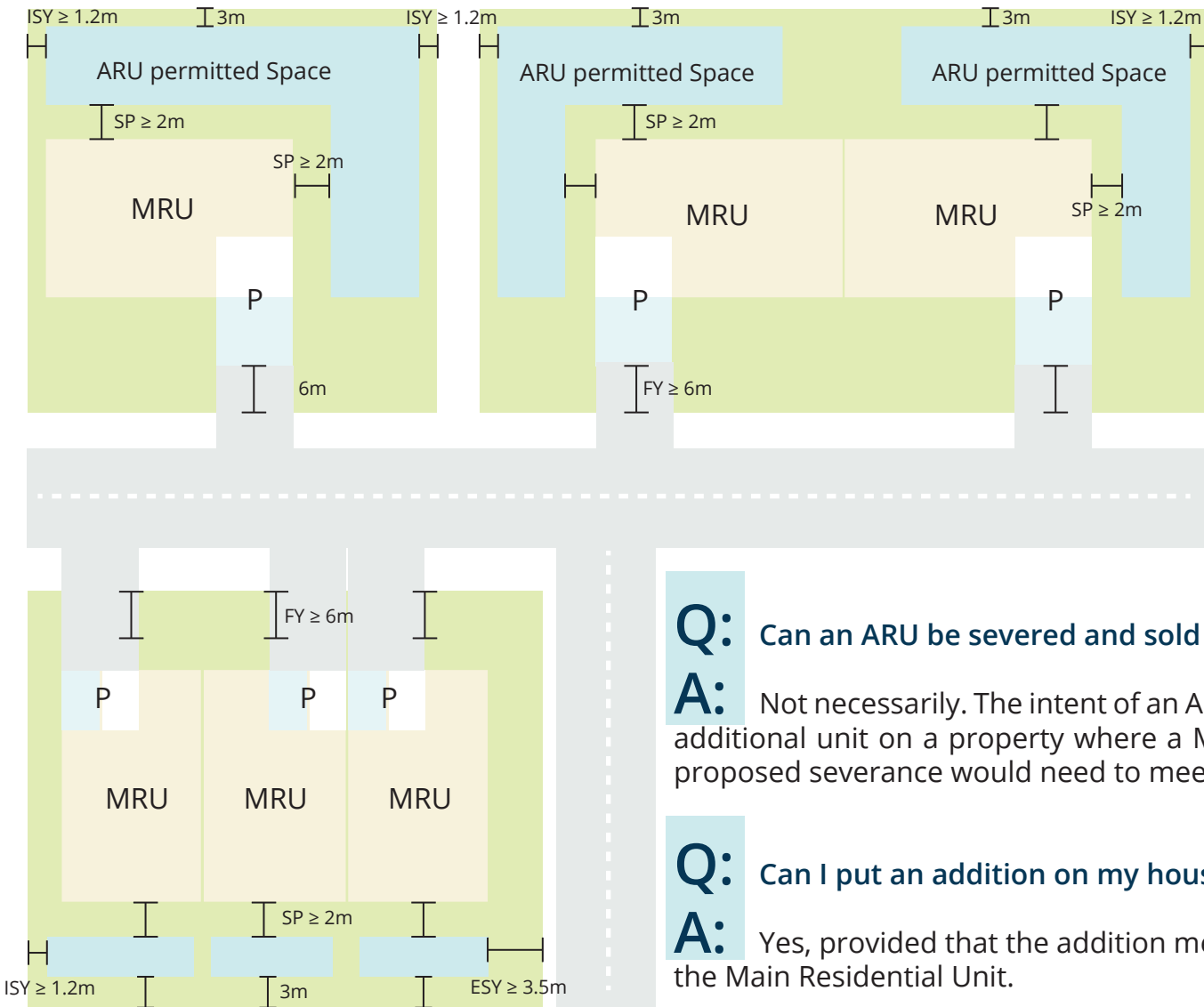


Note: Ontario Building Code Requirements must be met in addition to Zoning requirements.





# Where Are Detached ARUs Allowed To Be Built?



**Q:** Does my ARU need a separate address?

**A:** Yes, please contact Planning Services to have an address assigned to your ARU. This address will be assigned as a secondary address (infill address) to the property to ensure the safety of the people residing in both dwelling units.

**Q:** Do I need insurance on my ARU?

**A:** Yes. You will need to contact your individual insurance provider for quotes and information on coverage for your Additional Residential Unit.




**Q:** Can an ARU be severed and sold separately?



**A:** Not necessarily. The intent of an Additional Residential Unit is to provide an additional unit on a property where a Main Residential Unit already exists. Any proposed severance would need to meet applicable planning requirements.

**Q:** Can I put an addition on my house and use this area as part of my ARU?

**A:** Yes, provided that the addition meets all the Zoning By-law regulations for the Main Residential Unit.

**FY:** Front Yard  
**RY:** Rear Yard  
**ISY:** Interior Side Yard  
**ESY:** Exterior Side Yard  
**SP:** Separation

 Area where a **detached** ARU is permitted  
 Main Residential Unit (MRU)  
 Lot Area

 Parking Space For ARU  
 Parking Space For MRU



# How Can I Find My Zoning Requirements?

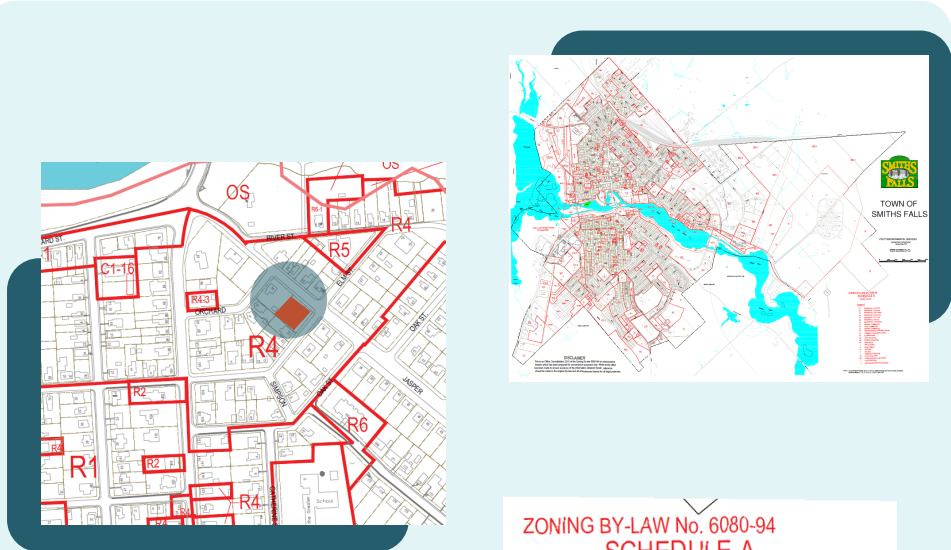


**1** **What is my zone?**  
 Go to the zoning map of Smiths Falls and find out your property's zone.  
 You can Find the Zoning Map here:  
<http://www.smithsfalls.ca/media/2017/06/Zoning-Map.pdf>

**2** **What are the rules for my zone?**  
 Go to the Town of Smiths Falls Zoning By-law.  
 You can find the Zoning Bylaw here:  
<https://www.smithsfalls.ca/media/2022/06/June-18-2021-Comprehensive-Zoning-By-Law-Consolidation.pdf>

**3** Find your property's zone section from the Table of Contents.

**4** The zoning provisions for your property will guide your plans. The Table of Contents also shows specific requirements for ARUs.



**ZONING BY-LAW No. 6080-94**  
**SCHEDULE A**  
 Revised July 2014

**Legend**

- R1 RESIDENTIAL TYPE ONE
- R2 RESIDENTIAL TYPE TWO
- R3 RESIDENTIAL TYPE THREE
- R4 RESIDENTIAL TYPE FOUR**
- R5 RESIDENTIAL TYPE FIVE
- R6 RESIDENTIAL TYPE SIX
- R7 RESIDENTIAL TYPE SEVEN
- C1 GENERAL COMMERCIAL
- C2 LOCAL COMMERCIAL
- C3 HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL
- C4 NEIGHBOURHOOD SHOPPING CENTRE
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 OFFICE CONSOLIDATION: June, 2021  
 Prepared for convenience with every effort to ensure accuracy. However, for legal purposes, refer to original and amending By-laws.  
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## What Can I Do If I Can't Meet The Zoning Requirements?

If your property or project doesn't quite meet the zoning standards needed to make it eligible for a building permit, you may be able to pursue a minor variance from the Zoning By-law to allow your ARU project move forward. Depending on what requirement(s) your project doesn't meet, you'll need to demonstrate how your project will not negatively impact aspects like parking, water supply, the character of the neighbourhood and the privacy of neighbouring properties. You may need the assistance of a hired professional planner to help you prepare your application.

A minor variance process can take up to 2 months and the application requires a processing fee. This is a public process that allows your neighbours to provide input on whether an application is suitable or not. The Town's Planning Advisory Committee (acting as the Committee of Adjustment) will consider granting a variance if the following criteria are met:

1. The application is minor in nature
2. The variance will be promoting the appropriate development or use of the property
3. The general intent and purpose of the municipal Zoning By-law are maintained, and
4. The general intent and purpose of the municipal Official Plan are maintained.

If you are considering a minor variance application for your project, you should talk to your neighbours to hear their feedback and address any concerns that may arise before spending the time needed prepare an application. You should also pre-consult with planning staff to learn more about the submission requirements, application process, timelines, fees, and policy requirements before applying for a minor variance.

For more information, please contact the Planning Clerk at **613-283-4124 ext. 1136**

**Q:** How do I connect my ARU to Town services?

**A:** In most cases, you will need to connect your ARU to water and wastewater services through the existing dwelling. While you can have your services metered separately between the primary house and the ARU, the new services will likely be provided through the existing connections to your property. You may need a qualified professional to advise if your current service connections can accommodate the change in use or if you need to pay to upgrade your services.

For more information on connections, contact the Public Works Department at **613-283-4124 ext. 3302**

**Q:** Will An ARU Affect My Property Taxes?

**A:** Yes. Your property taxes will increase because you are adding a use and/or structure to your property. Please contact the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) for more information on a property assessment. More information can be found at [www.mpac.ca](http://www.mpac.ca).

For information on the Town's tax rates please contact the Town of Smiths Falls Finance Department at **613-283-4124 ext. 1118**



# General Requirements For The Building Permit Process



**Designer(s):** Prepare Two (2) Full Sets of Working Drawings to scale with dimensions and details included.

**Property Site Plan:** Shall meet the Town's Zoning-By-law and any other related approvals, and shall include the following:

- a) Zone, lot area, dimensions, north arrow, setbacks from all existing structures to lot lines, existing structures, street entry, number and location of parking spots, services, utilities, or easement.
- b) **Lot Grading Plan:** grading plan may include grade elevation at building corners adjacent to properties, direction of surface storm water and swales, and existing drainage and patterns, including ditches.

**Note:** An Ontario Land Survey may be required for any lot specific condition or designated parking spots for ARU.

**Architectural, Structural and Fire Separation:** Plans shall meet Ontario Building Code and may include the following (as applicable):

- a) **Foundation Plan** may include footing size, depth below grade, concrete pad and anchorage detail.  
**Floor Plan(s):** Existing and proposed basement floor plan including programmings, openings, stairs, alarms, fire rated walls, doors, ceilings, plumbing, utility, furnace, building cross-section marker, and dimensioned framed walls and openings, post and beams size and roof frame.
- b) **Upper Floor Plan(s):** Existing and proposed main upper floor plans including programmings, openings, stairs, alarm, fire rated walls, doors, ceilings, floors, plumbing, building cross-section marker, and roof framing and truss plan.
- c) New fire separation details for floor and/or wall with code references listed (ex. Section SB-3 of the OBC)
- d) Building cross-section through fire-rated horizontal floor and or vertical wall assemblies
- e) **Building Elevation:** Existing building elevations and their photos including proposed grade, overall height of building, finish materials, lighting, etc.
- f) Designer to complete the Designer Information that includes total area of work
- g) If pre-fabricated structural design is used roof truss layout specification may be provided by the supplier.
- h) Hazardous substance report may be necessary (i.e. asbestos, mold, lead, mercury, etc)

**Heating, Ventilation & Air-Conditioning (HVAC):** Plans shall meet Ontario Building Code & Town's Building By-law and shall include the following:

- a) Existing/Proposed Heating system plans indicating any changes to existing HVAC or the design of a new HVAC system including any alterations or replacements with handling capacity and air exchange. If a new system is being proposed, the mechanical designer must complete the Designer Information form.

**Note:** Where required by the Ontario Building Code, a qualified designer (ex. Professional Engineer, Certified Architect, or BCIN Designer) may be needed.

**Applicant:** The "Application for a Permit to Construct" shall be completed and submitted with the above drawings. This application package shall include:

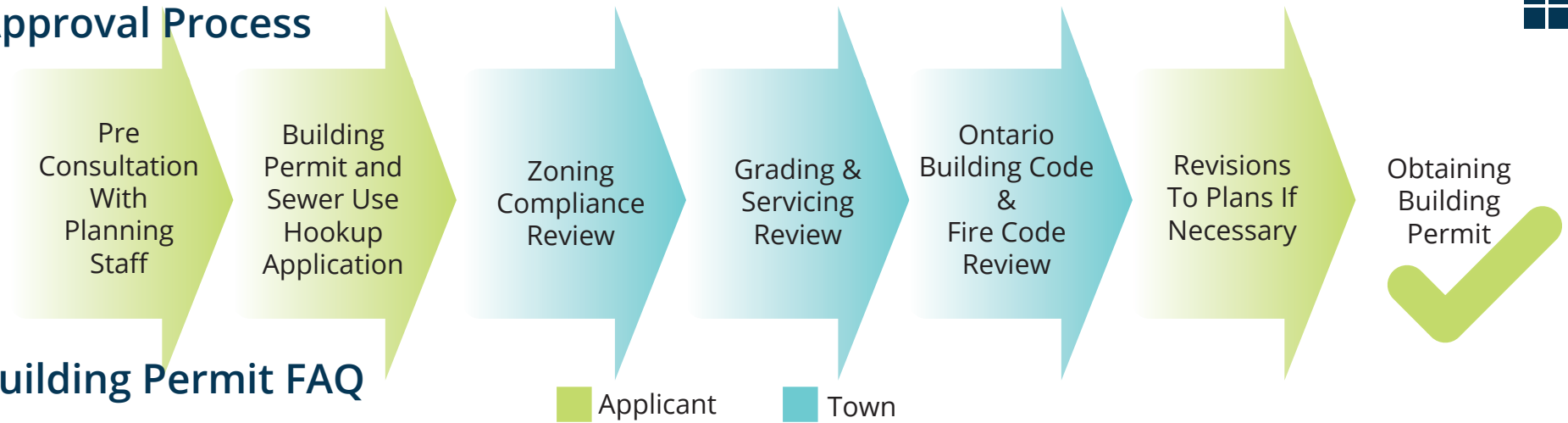
- Consent authorizing an agent to act on their behalf if agent signs the application
- Gross Building Area on Section A of the Project Information sheet.
- Project value (\$) including all labour, materials, services & equipment necessary to complete the project.
- The initial payment for the Permit Fee as per the Building By-law

**Note:** The final Permit Fee and Water Services Fee is due prior to permit pickup.





# Approval Process



## Building Permit FAQ

### How do I get started?

A Building Permit is required to establish your Additional Residential Unit. There may be different Ontario Building Code requirements for your project depending on whether you are renovating a house, putting an addition on your house, converting an accessory structure, or building an entirely new detached accessory structure. Different properties and building types may have different submission requirements and fees. If you need assistance with your building permit application, please contact the Building Department at the Town of Smiths Falls at [building@smithsfalls.ca](mailto:building@smithsfalls.ca) or 613-283-4124 ext. 1132

### Will I need to pay a development charge?

Development Charges are a one-time fee levied by municipalities on new residential and non-residential developments that help pay for a portion of the growth-related infrastructure. As the Town of Smiths Falls continues to grow, we need to ensure each new dwelling unit is accounted for by our updated infrastructure services. In most cases, development charges will not apply to Additional Residential Units. For more information on development charges, please check the Town of Smiths Falls website or contact the Building Department for assistance.

### How much will it cost?

Building permit fees for an Additional Residential Unit are based on the Building By-law's fee schedule. Building permit fees for renovation and additions to create an ARU are based on the construction value of the project at a rate of **\$12.40 per \$1000.00** with a minimum fee of **\$62.97**.

These fees can be found on the Town of Smiths Falls Website at <http://www.smithsfalls.ca/business/permits/> or by contacting our Building department.

**Note: As Building permit fees are subject to change, please verify any fees and charges with the Town before preparing payments for your application.**

### Am I required to submit a lot grading plan?

Depending on the location of the Additional Residential Unit, a Lot Grading Plan may be required to ensure the Town's engineering standards are being met. A Lot Grading Plan aims to confirm drainage is directed away from the building and ensure the project does not cause drainage issues or damage to neighbouring properties and may propose adding items such as Swales, slopes, infiltration galleries, etc. Determination of the requirements for a Lot Grading Plan will take place at the time of application for a building permit.





# Additional Residential Unit (ARU)

A Guide To Adding More Units To Your Home

[www.smithsfalls.ca](http://www.smithsfalls.ca)