



Report

Subject: Additional Residential Units (ARU) & 2024 Final Building Permit Report

Department: Infrastructure Services

Division: Building

Report #: INS-2025-005

Meeting Date: 2025-02-10

Recommendations

That report INS-2025-005, Additional Residential Units (ARU) & 2024 Final Building Permit Report, be received.

Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Council on the 2024 Building Code changes and Additional Residential Units. On April 10, 2024, the Province released Ontario Regulation 163/24 providing changes to the Building Code regulation in Ontario.

The building code changes increases harmonization with the National Building Code and aims to promote housing supply and innovation. This latest edition was developed in consultation with industry partners including building officials, fire prevention officials, architects, engineers, builders, and the construction industry. The changes to the Building Code help ensure that Ontario continues to promote high standards of public health and safety, and performance in new and renovated buildings.

It is recommended that council accept this information report on the status of ARU's in the Town of Orangeville. This report is to provide information on the current processes and retained information and the future use of a viewable online registry system for all Additional Residential Units. Currently there is a master list of built multi-unit dwellings for Orangeville. The recommendation to move towards a formal Additional Residential Unit registry will help the community with flexible living arrangements, affordable housing and more rental housing. It will provide increased safety for the community with legally registered units built to meet health and safety standards of Building, Electrical and Fire codes. ARU's provide efficient use of existing infrastructure and optimize the existing housing stock with minimal impact on the current built environment in existing neighbourhoods.

In conclusion, it is recommended to have an online registry for Additional Residential Units in the Town of Orangeville.

Background

The current economic climate has identified housing affordability as an issue throughout Canada and Ontario. The Town of Orangeville is not exempt from these economic pressures. This report provides a high-level review of ARU changes for the 2024 Ontario Building Code.

What are ARU's

ARU's are smaller, self-contained dwelling units (i.e., with their own kitchen, bathroom and sleeping areas) that are inside, attached to, or in a detached accessory building on the same property as a primary dwelling.

ARU's can take many forms, such as basement apartments, attached suites, detached accessory structure, but they must be smaller than the principal dwelling unit or meet the requirements of the Zoning By-Law.

Additional Residential Units

The Building Code has simplified the design and safety requirements for Additional Residential Units by harmonizing the requirements for new purpose-built ARU's and conversions of existing buildings to the same standards. Designers wishing to utilize compliance alternatives (special section of the code) for buildings greater than 5 years old still have the option to do so. Some of the changes in the new Building Code include.

- Reduction in required ceiling heights from 1.95m to 1.89m.
- Reduction for clear height over stairs and under beams/ducts from 1.95m to 1.85m.
- Exemption provided for a house with a secondary suite for separate exits. (egress from a dwelling unit into a public corridor or exterior passageway does to go in opposite directions to 2 separate exits)
- Shared egress conditions are exempt from requiring an additional means of egress from each dwelling in a house with a secondary suite except where a dwelling unit is above another and the upper unit opens onto an exterior passageway more than 1.5 m above grade, an additional means of egress may be required based on the rating of the floor and number of exits it serves.
- Permissions for open stair risers.

- Replacing fire separations and fire ratings of common areas such as public corridors and columns/beams with specific construction materials with smoke tight barriers without ratings.
- Permissions for wireless smoke alarms.
- Carbon monoxide detectors must be interconnected in a building with a secondary suite.
- Reduction is permitted for the sound transmission class and apparent sound transmission class between walls/floors of adjoining suites where the building is older than 5 years.

2024 Building Permit Report

Timing and Transition

The 2024 Building Code came into effect on January 1, 2025, with a three-month grace period until March 31, 2025, for applications for which the working drawings were substantially complete before January 1, 2025.

During the transition period, only one edition of the Building Code, either the 2012 or 2024, can be used in the design and construction of a building.

The version of the Building Code that applies at the time of the permit application is the version that will continue to apply to the building throughout the processes of plans review, permit issuance, construction, inspection and occupancy of the building. Building Officials are expected to be experts and enforce both codes.

Please note that 51 ARU permits were issued in 2024 representing approximately 20% of the 269 applications. Please review the attached Final Building Permit report for 2024, Attachment 1.

Analysis/Current Situation

The purpose of this report is to give a 5-year snapshot of the number of ARU's in our community. The Town of Orangeville has a current master list of all **491** ARU's. The numbers below are a positive sign for the demand for more ARU units in Orangeville.

2024 - 51
2023 - 44
2022 - 29
2021 - 34
2020 - 19

Corporate Implications

This report will not generate direct implications. If future actions related to this report will have a corporate impact, a report will be presented to Council for approval, if required.

Conclusion

It is recommended that the Town of Orangeville have a public registry of ARU's. This will ensure the health and safety of all residents and tenants. The registry allows the Fire Department, Paramedics and other required services to be aware of multi-unit dwellings. Identification of multi-unit addresses is vital. Part of a formal registration process will require notification to utility companies, post office, etc. at final occupancy of all units. The Building Division will track all building permits related to the ARU registry. This report is for information purposes only. A formal registry implementation will be in consultation with all departments and an additional report to council for approval.

Strategic Alignment

Strategic Plan

Strategic Goal: Economic Resilience

Objective: Readiness – Ensure availability and affordability of employment lands and housing

Notice Provisions

N/A

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment(s): 1. 2024 Final Building Permit Report