

Additional Residential Units

AMO SUBMISSION TO THE MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

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Executive Summary

AMO appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendment to the Additional Residential Units (ARU) regulation (O.Reg. 299/19) under the *Planning Act*. As AMO has previously commented in our submission on Bill 185, municipalities support changes that streamline Ontario's land use planning framework as we face an urgent need to build new homes. However, these changes must be balanced with the need to ensure that good planning processes remain in place. It will also be important to ensure that any increased use of ARUs is captured in housing data.

AMO remains concerned about the cumulative impact of continued changes to the land use planning framework that increasingly places the onus directly on municipal governments to enable faster growth, while simultaneously removing tools that municipalities use to ensure livability and environmentally-sound development. These changes can have the opposite of their intended effect – increasing the cost and time to approve development. Municipalities and builders need certainty to focus on delivering new housing instead of catching up to provincial policy changes. Any additional changes to the ARU framework moving forward should be minor, and scoped to ensure municipalities continue to have flexibility to plan and approve local growth responsibly.

Removing Barriers to Additional Residential Units

AMO continues to support removing barriers to building additional residential units (ARUs) so long as care is taken to balance the remove of these barriers with appropriate flexibility, so municipalities continue to have tools to manage local growth.

The increased use of ARUs to provide more opportunities to build homes makes sense, however, implementation needs to be done with caution to avoid potential issues such as overloading infrastructure capacity. This is particularly important in areas where there is growing demand for housing, but limited, or private water and wastewater servicing outside established settlement areas. We strongly support that the proposed changes do not apply to rural areas, or settlement areas without full municipal servicing, where there may be limited septic system capacity to absorb ARUs. This will help ensure that growth and the provision of infrastructure are coordinated and adequate for the community. The Province may also wish to consider scoping the proposed ARU regulation to recognize the availability of electricity capacity. Although electricity service is not delivered by municipalities, it has been identified as a growing limitation on the ability to create new housing units.

We are pleased to see that the proposed ARU framework makes efforts to strike a balance between facilitating growth and retaining local flexibility. For example, removing angular plane requirements but not maximum height limits strike a balance that creates the opportunity for more ancillary structures and taller buildings while still allowing municipalities to control building form and mitigate the impacts of these new units on

neighbouring properties. This is a flexible approach that balances the interests of both new and existing residents.

Managing drainage and stormwater runoff alongside new growth is essential to avoid creating significant flooding risks. We are pleased that the proposal to allow 45% of lot coverage is balanced by continuing to allow municipal controls through setbacks. This approach can help allow municipalities to manage drainage by preserving an appropriate amount of permeable surface using setbacks, while still allowing ARUs on lots with adequate space. Similar to the Province's approach to not apply the ARU framework to apply where servicing is not in place, we encourage the Province to consider not allowing ARUs in areas that have been identified as high risk for flooding, even if there are existing residences in place.

Conclusion

AMO supports continued efforts to help unlock more housing across Ontario, and we are pleased to see that the proposed ARU framework strikes a balance that preserves municipal tools to responsibly manage growth, particularly around planning growth alongside critical infrastructure. We encourage the Province to continue to seek this balance when making changes to the planning framework. The successful delivery of 1.5 million new homes will require a coordinated planning effort so new housing units are able to access essential services and infrastructure.