



Secondary Suites

What is a Secondary Suite?

It is a self-contained, accessory dwelling unit that is located within a single detached house and has its own separate cooking, sleeping and bathing facilities.

A secondary suite provides living accommodation based on rental periods of one month or more and is not intended for short-term accommodations.

Can I Have a Secondary Suite?

Your property must have the necessary zoning to allow a secondary suite. A secondary suite is permitted if your property is located within one of the following zones with an “s” notation:

- Agricultural (A1s)
- Rural 1 (RU1s)
- Rural 2 (RU2s)
- Rural 3 (RU3s)
- Country Residential (RU4s)
- Small Lot Country Residential (RU5s)
- Small Holdings (RU6s)
- Single Detached Housing (R1s)

A secondary suite must be located within a single detached house and is not permitted if an accessory home exists on the same property.

If your property does not have the necessary zoning, you may apply to amend zoning bylaw No. 871 through a rezoning application.

Application Considerations

- Existing zoning
- Direct access to outside
- Within a single detached house and not connected by a breezeway or carport
- Adequate on-site parking
- Ability to comply with BC Building Code
- Ability to meet servicing requirements

How is a Rezoning Application Made?

Community Services has application packages that outline required information, drawings and fees.

It is important to make an appointment with staff before submitting a formal application to review submission requirements.

Submitting an application does not guarantee approval.

Application Costs

- Application fee
- Documents/plans necessary to complete application requirements
- Sign requirements

Other costs may include:

- Servicing requirements
- Professional reports
- Legal fees
- Surveying fees

What is a Carriage House?

It is a self-contained dwelling unit that is located outside of a single detached house and not permitted in the Regional District.

How Long does the Application Process Take?

Rezoning applications typically take 2-3 months to proceed through the evaluation and approval process.

Public Notification

- Notice of Application Sign(s) to be posted on subject property (Applicant)
- Written notices are mailed to surrounding owners and posted in the newspaper (Regional District)

Public Input

- Advisory Commissions
- Public Hearing
- Public Notice

Applications are referred to various Regional District Advisory Commissions for review and comment. These comments are considered by the Regional Board when making a decision.

If you currently have an illegal secondary suite, there are two options available to correct the illegal condition

1. Legalize the Suite

- Apply to amend the zoning bylaw to add the “s” notation
- In preparing the application, it is advised that you obtain the services of an architect or contractor to determine what will be required to bring the existing suite into compliance with the BC Building Code

2. Decommission the Illegal Suite

- Obtain a Building Permit (BP) from Inspections staff
- A BP may require:
 - The removal of the exhaust fans and applicable wiring, including any plugs, switches and breakers;
 - Technical Safety BC confirmation of removal with approved electrical permit, and/or natural gas rough-in removal (a licensed gas contractor may be necessary)
 - Additional items may need to be addressed as determined by the Building Inspector.

A decommissioned suite would ensure the entire building is free-flowing and interconnected. This means that there are to be no internal locking doors that could be used to divide the building into separate portions and that all levels of the single family dwelling area are to be interconnected by an internal free-flowing staircase.

The Rezoning Process

Discuss the Proposal with Staff

Submit a Complete Application

Application Review

Relevant agencies, Regional District departments, and applicable public advisory commissions are asked to review the submission and provide comments. When comments have been reviewed, staff will prepare a report to the Regional Board.

Public Notification

The applicant is required to place a notification sign on the property. Prior to Public Hearing the Regional District notifies the community through newspaper ads and letters.

Consideration of 1st Reading by the Regional Board

At first reading the Regional Board may:

- Not approve the bylaw,
- Defer and request more information, or
- Give first reading to the bylaw. The Regional Board may require certain conditions be met prior to further consideration.

Public Hearing

An official public hearing provides the opportunity for the public and the applicant to present their comments to the Regional Board.

Consideration of 2nd and 3rd Readings by the Regional Board

The Regional Board may:

- Not approve the bylaw, or
- Give further reading(s) to the bylaw. The Regional Board may require that certain conditions be met prior to further consideration.

Consideration of Adoption

This is the last step in the process. Adoption means that the Zoning Bylaw is officially amended.