



Secondary Suites – Joe Rich

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 land use designation to allow a secondary suite. A secondary suite is permitted if your property is located within one of the following designations with an “s” notation:

- Large Holdings (LHs);
- Rural Acreage (RAs);
- Small Holdings 1 (SH-1s);
- Small Holdings; (SH-2s);
- Country Residential (CRs).

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 land use designation, you may apply to amend the Joe Rich Rural Land Use Bylaw (RLUB) Bylaw No. 1195 through a re-designation application.

How is a Rezoning Application Made?

Development 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 Considerations

- Existing land use designation
- 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

Application Costs

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

Other costs may include:

- Servicing requirements
- Professional reports
- Legal fees

Provincial Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Legislation

In the fall of 2023, the Province introduced small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) legislation to increase housing supply. SSMUH requirements do not apply to areas regulated by rural land use bylaws. As such, staff are not actively working on any changes to the Joe Rich RLUB.

Property owners in Joe Rich wishing to develop a secondary suite must apply for a site-specific Rural Land Use Bylaw Amendment through the process described on the next page. As Public Hearings are no longer required for secondary suite applications, review processes have become more streamlined and efficient. In addition, permitted secondary suites may be eligible for the provincial [Secondary Suites Incentive Program](#).

The Land Use Designation Amendment Process

Discuss Proposal with Staff



Submit Complete Application



Application Reviewed

Comments are requested from RDCO staff, relevant agencies, and Regional District Advisory Committees.



Public Notification



1st, 2nd, and 3rd Readings by Regional Board



Ministry of Transportation approval may be required



Consideration of Adoption



How Long does the Application Process Take?

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

Public Input

Land Use Designation Amendment applications are referred to other governance agencies and various Regional District advisory committees for review and comment. Applicants are required to install Notice of Application Signs at the property boundary and the Regional District will mail notifications to surrounding property owners and advertise the proposal in the newspaper.

The Regional Board will consider feedback from staff, effected agencies, advisory committees and the public before making a decision on the Land Use Designation amendment proposal.

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 rural land use bylaw.
- 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.
- Once the Regional Board has adopted the amendment and the property is permitted to have a secondary suite, please apply for a Building Permit from RDCO Inspection Services.

2. Decommission the Illegal Suite

- Obtain a Building Permit from RDCO Inspection Services.
- A Building Permit may require:
 - The removal of the exhaust fans and applicable wiring, including any plugs, switches and breakers.
 - BC Safety Authority 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.

For more info contact RDCO Development Services:

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