

Secondary Suites, Coach Houses & Garden Suites

Frequently Asked Questions

In order to preserve and increase the supply of available and affordable housing, the City of Chilliwack has adopted a policy (the Secondary Suites Policy) to permit the rental of secondary suites within any single family home in the City, regardless of the zone of the lot. Additional amendments to the Zoning Bylaw have resulted in the inclusion of Coach Houses and Garden Suites as a permitted use within the R1-A (One Family Residential) Zone. As the R1-A Zone is the most common single family residential zone in Chilliwack, the options for rental housing within existing single family neighbourhoods has significantly increased throughout the City.



What is a Secondary Suite?

A secondary suite is a self-contained dwelling located within a single detached house and has separate cooking, sleeping and bathing facilities. The Zoning Bylaw limits the size of a secondary suite to having a floor area less than 40% of the habitable floor area of the house, or no more than 60m², whichever is less

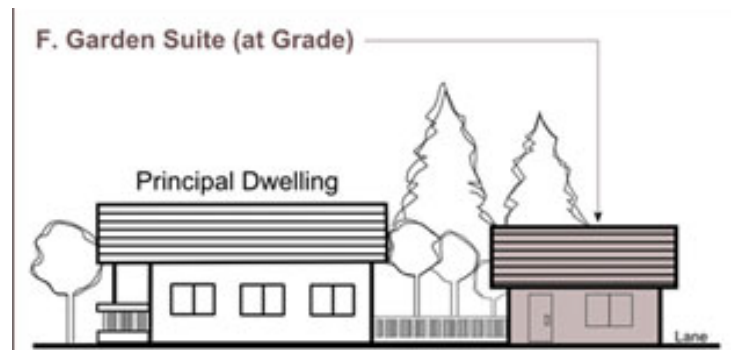


What is a Coach House?

A coach house is a residential unit located in a detached building above an ancillary use (i.e. garage, storage room, etc.). The size, height and setback requirements for a coach house can be found within the zone description applicable to the property.

What is a Garden Suite?

A garden suite is a detached at-grade accessory dwelling unit located on the same lot as a principle residence.

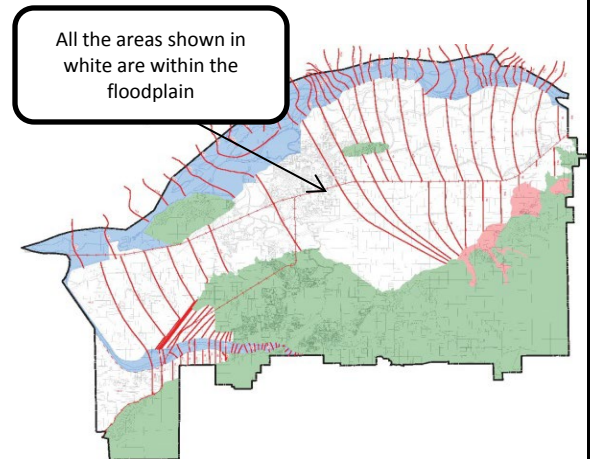


What makes a secondary suite legal?

A secondary suite is legal if it is located within a zone that permits a secondary suite, is built in accordance with a building permit (meets BC Building Code requirements) and meets provincial flood protection requirements. If you are building a new home you might want to think about including a secondary suite, or building your home to be suite-ready.

What if my property is in the floodplain?

All residential construction in the City must comply with the Flood Construction Level (FCL) requirements as outlined in the Floodplain Regulation Bylaw. If your property is located within the floodplain, whether building a new home or renovating an existing space to include a secondary suite, the suite must be located above the FCL. As such, it is highly unlikely that homes within the floodplain will meet the requirements to construct either a secondary suite or garden suite.



How is the City managing existing suites?

The City will not seek out, or respond to complaints about, secondary suites that may have been constructed outside the scope of the City's building regulation scheme prior to May 15, 2018.

Where are coach houses and garden suites permitted?

Coach houses and garden suites are permitted in a number of Residential and Comprehensive Development Zones. Please refer to the Zoning Bylaw on the City website at <https://www.chilliwack.com> for further clarification.

What steps do I take to build a coach house or garden suite?

1. Contact the Planning & Strategic Initiatives Department to determine if your property is zoned to allow for a coach house or garden suite.
2. Submit a Development Permit application for Development Permit Area 10 – Coach Houses or Garden Suites.
 - a. The City created a Development Permit Area, encompassing the entire City, to regulate the form and character of coach houses and garden suites. The intention of the Development Permit design guidelines is to ensure that coach houses and garden suites meet a high design standard, integrate seamlessly into the existing neighbourhood and protect the privacy of the neighbouring properties.
3. Apply for a Building Permit.

How many parking spaces do I need?

Generally, two off-street parking spaces are required for the principal dwelling, and one off street parking space is required for the secondary suite, coach house, or garden suite. Of the three required parking spaces, two must be unenclosed. Some variations exist between zones, and as such, please contact the Planning & Strategic Initiatives Department for confirmation of the parking requirement prior to submission of a Development Permit application.

Will I be billed for additional fees?

An additional curbside collection fee is applicable to the secondary suite, coach house or garden suite. *An additional flat rate fee for water and sewer is applicable to coach houses and garden suites, in addition to consumption charges. Secondary suites within a home will be charged one flat rate in addition to consumption charges.* Please note, payment for service does not mean a suite is legal.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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