

City of Maple Ridge

**COUNCIL WORKSHOP AGENDA**

**April 26, 2022**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Virtual Online Meeting including Council Chambers**

*The purpose of the Council Workshop is to review and discuss policies and other items of interest to Council. Although resolutions may be passed at this meeting, the intent is to make a consensus decision to send an item to Council for debate and vote or refer the item back to staff for more information or clarification.*

*The meeting is live streamed and recorded by the City of Maple Ridge.*

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**1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

2.1 Minutes - March 29, 2022

**3. PRESENTATIONS AT THE REQUEST OF COUNCIL**

**4. UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS**

**4.1 Parks, Recreation & Culture Engagement Program**

Stephen Slawuta of RC Strategies to provide a presentation on the Parks, Recreation & Culture Engagement Program.

**4.2 Market Update and Secondary Suites Regulatory Options**

Staff report dated April 12, 2022, providing a housing and rental market update along with accessory dwelling unit regulatory options.

**4.3 2022 Property Tax Rates Bylaw and 2022-2026 Financial Plan Amending Bylaw**

Staff presentation by Trevor Thompson, Director of Finance.

**5. CORRESPONDENCE**

**6. BRIEFING ON OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST/QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL**

**7. MATTERS DEEMED EXPEDIENT**

**8. NOTICE OF CLOSED COUNCIL MEETING**

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

APPROVED BY: Patrick Hlavac-Winsor

DATE: April 21, 2022

PREPARED BY: Corinn Howes

CHECKED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: April 21, 2022

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

City of Maple Ridge

***COUNCIL WORKSHOP MINUTES***

March 29, 2022

The Minutes of the City Council Meeting held on March 29, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. held virtually and hosted in the Council Chambers of the City Hall, 11995 Haney Place, Maple Ridge, British Columbia for the purpose of transacting regular City business.

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<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>Appointed Staff</i>
<i>Elected Officials</i>	S. Hartman, Chief Administrative Officer
Mayor M. Morden	C. Crabtree, General Manager Corporate Services
Councillor J. Dueck	S. Labonne, General Manager Parks, Recreation & Culture
Councillor C. Meadus	D. Pollock, General Manager Engineering Services
Councillor G. Robson	P. Hlavac-Winsor, General Counsel and Executive Director, Legislative Services
Councillor R. Svendsen	S. Nichols, Corporate Officer
Councillor A. Yousef	
<i>ABSENT</i>	<i>Other Staff as Required</i>
Councillor K. Duncan	C. Goddard, Director of Planning
	F. Smith, Director of Engineering
	T. Thompson, Director of Finance
	L. Zosiak, Manager, Community Planning

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These Minutes are posted on the City Web Site at [www.mapleridge.ca](http://www.mapleridge.ca)

Note: Councillor Robson participated virtually. Councillor Svendsen was absent at the start of the meeting. The Mayor chaired the meeting from Council Chambers.

1. ***APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA***

R/2022-WS-013

It was moved and seconded

**That the agenda of the March 29, 2022 Council Workshop Meeting be approved as circulated.**

CARRIED

2. ***ADOPTION OF MINUTES***

2.1 **Minutes of the March 8, 2022 Council Workshop Meeting**

R/2022-WS-014

It was moved and seconded

**That the minutes of the Council Workshop Meeting of March 8, 2022 be adopted as circulated.**

CARRIED

3. ***PRESENTATIONS AT THE REQUEST OF COUNCIL*** – Nil

4. ***UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS***

4.1 **123 Corridor Upgrades**

The Director of Engineering provided a detailed presentation on the project and staff responded to questions from Council.

Note: Due to technical issues Councillor Svendsen entered the meeting electronically at 11:13 a.m. during the staff presentation.

Staff spoke to the next steps for the project.

4.2 **Assessment of Employment Future in Thornhill and 256<sup>th</sup> Street Industrial Area**

Staff report dated March 29, 2022 recommending that staff proceed with expanding use in the 256<sup>th</sup> Street Industrial Area and that the Official Community Plan policies and designations for Thornhill be updated to Industrial Reserve.

The Manager of Community Planning provided a detailed presentation and staff responded to questions from Council.

Note: Councillor Yousef left the meeting at 12:07 p.m. and returned at 12:15 p.m.

R/2022-WS-015

Moved and seconded

**That staff proceed with a 256 Industrial Area Strategy, including timelines and infrastructure requirements, and report back to Council;**

**That staff develop a process, including a timeline and strategy, for employment lands at Thornhill and report back to Council; and,**

**That the Assessment of Employment Future in Thornhill and 256<sup>th</sup> Street Industrial Area be presented to the Corporate Development and Enterprise Services Committee for additional input.**

CARRIED

5. *CORRESPONDENCE* – Nil
6. *BRIEFING ON OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST/QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL* – Nil
7. *MATTERS DEEMED EXPEDIENT* – Nil
8. *NOTICE OF CLOSED COUNCIL MEETING* – Nil
9. *ADJOURNMENT* – 1:05 p.m.

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M. Morden, Mayor

Certified Correct

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S. Nichols, Corporate Officer



**mapleridge.ca**

**City of Maple Ridge**

**TO:** His Worship Mayor Michael Morden  
and Members of Council  
**MEETING DATE:** April 26, 2022

**FROM:** Chief Administrative Officer  
**MEETING:** Workshop

**SUBJECT:** **Market Update and Accessory Dwelling Unit Regulatory Options**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Currently, the housing and rental market is being described as a crisis by the Province of BC and the Union of BC Municipalities. The purchase cost of single-detached houses and townhouses is becoming out-of-reach, even for dual-income households, and the limited rental supply is causing rental rates to rise. These increasing housing costs are making affordability a challenge for many residents at all stages of life. To maintain a vibrant and thriving City, Maple Ridge needs to attract and retain working households and enable them to grow and age in place.

Secondary suites and detached garden suites, known as Accessory Dwelling Units, are not only an important component of the community's rental market, but these forms also assist in homeownership affordability as mortgage helpers. Encouraging mortgage helper units contributes to an increase in the community's rental housing stock and housing availability. Maple Ridge's secondary suite program has been in place since 1999 and at that time the City was considered a leader in promoting housing choice.

To increase housing choice and assist with affordability, the Province has removed barriers to these key housing forms. As of December 2019, the BC Building Code (BCBC) changed to remove size restrictions for secondary suites and permit this form in more types of housing, such as duplexes and townhouses. As of December 2021, the Province made changes to the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) regulations to permit secondary suites and detached garden suites on the same lot. Although the Province has removed these barriers, municipalities must choose to align their Zoning Bylaw to expand where these key forms of housing is permitted. As a result, other municipalities in the Lower Mainland have expanded or are exploring ways to expand housing choice by their secondary suite and detached garden suite program because it is an efficient use of land and resources.

This report provides a market update on housing in Maple Ridge and reports out on senior government regulatory changes aimed at encouraging more accessory dwelling units throughout the Province. Ultimately, the purpose of this report is to remind Council of regulatory options that were explored during the recent review of accessory dwelling units (2017-2021) that would positively impact current and future residents, who are struggling to afford places to live in Maple Ridge, and determine if the time has come to expand housing options for local residents.

This report contains eleven recommendations aimed at creating additional secondary suite and detached garden suite units in the community. The proposed Zoning Bylaw amendments will be accompanied by a staff report that provides detailed information and description of the amendments.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### **Secondary Suite Recommendations:**

1. That staff prepare amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to remove the maximum and minimum gross floor area requirement for secondary suites;
2. That staff develop 'Alternate Compliance Methods for Alterations to Existing Buildings to Add a Secondary Suite' in the BC Building Code;
3. That staff prepare amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to permit secondary suites in all single-detached residential zones;
4. That staff prepare amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to permit secondary suites in ground-orientated duplexes and townhouses;
5. That staff prepare amendments to the Zoning Bylaw permit lock-off suites in apartments and stacked townhouses;

### **Detached Garden Suite Recommendations:**

6. That staff prepare amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to permit secondary suites and detached garden suites on the same lot in the Agricultural Land Reserve;
7. That staff prepare amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to allow flexible siting of a detached garden suite on a lot;
8. That staff prepare amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to remove the minimum size requirement for detached garden suites;
9. That staff prepare amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to permit larger detached garden suites in specific residential zones;
10. That staff prepare amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to permit secondary suites and detached garden suites on the same lot in all residential zones; and further
11. That staff develop a program, for council consideration, that would create "pre-approved" building plan templates for detached garden suites.

## **1.0 BACKGROUND:**

### **1.1 Official Community Plan and Housing Action Plan**

Maple Ridge's Official Community Plan (OCP) reflects the community's long-term vision to become more vibrant and prosperous, offering residents a strong local economy, stable and special neighbourhoods, thoughtful development, a diversity of agriculture, and respect for the built and natural environment. Through the OCP housing policies, the need to provide a mix of housing types and uses, as well as affordability, is recognized. To encourage a variety of housing types and densities to meet the diverse residential needs of the City, the OCP housing policies are intended to help:

- Accommodate growth through infill by promoting housing types and tenures to support diverse needs (e.g., income), lifestyles (e.g., age), and preferences (Policy 3-1);

- Consider density bonus as a means of encouraging the provision of affordable, rental and special needs housing, and amenities (Policy 3-30);
- Support the provision of rental accommodation and encourage the construction of rental units that vary in size and number of bedrooms (Policy 3-31); and
- Encourage housing that incorporates “age-in-place” concepts and seniors housing designed to accommodate special needs (Policy 3-33).

In addition to the OCP policies, the Housing Action Plan (2014) and its Implementation Framework (2015) provide strong direction to guide decision-making related to market and non-market housing in Maple Ridge. The endorsed strategies of the Housing Action Plan are summarized below:

- Support the development of a mix of housing forms;
- Create new rental housing opportunities;
- Continue to monitor secondary suites policies & bylaws;
- Expand the garden suites program; and
- Minimize the loss of existing rental housing.

## 1.2 Recent Work

The review of current regulations for secondary suites (SS) and detached garden suites (DGS) has been underway since the Housing Action Plan was endorsed in 2014. More recently, a review of the detached garden suites and secondary suites regulations was undertaken in the Fall of 2017 and included a public consultation process. The consultation outcomes on the secondary suites and detached garden suites programs were presented at the February 6, 2018 Council Workshop meeting. Out of 193 questionnaire responses, the majority of respondents indicated support for secondary suites in all single-detached and two-unit (duplex) residential zones as well as lock off suites in townhouses. For DGS's, the majority of respondents indicated support for this form on all single-detached residential lots, for smaller and larger DGS's, as well as permitting secondary suites and detached garden suites on the same lot. From 2018 to present, a number of initiatives have been undertaken, including the Detached Garden Suite Pilot Project and the removal of the owner occupancy requirement (and introduction of the Good Neighbour Agreement), which are briefly discussed below.

### ***Detached Garden Suite Pilot Project***

At the February 6, 2018 Council Workshop meeting, Council directed staff to provide information on pilot projects to allow a DGS size to be up to 140m<sup>2</sup> (1500 ft<sup>2</sup>) or 15% of the lot area, whichever is less. At Council Workshop on May 1, 2018, Council directed staff to undertake the Detached Garden Suite Pilot Project. Approximately 60 inquiries were received to participate in the pilot, but only six projects were selected and only two were constructed. The DGS Pilot Project outcomes, presented to Council April 14, 2020, identified the following cost benefits to building a larger DGS:

- Provision of water, sanitary, electrical, etc. on the site is the same cost regardless of the size of unit being constructed;
- Foundations are a relatively fixed cost regardless of the size of unit being constructed, as the price will not vary much from a 500ft<sup>2</sup> unit to a 1,000ft<sup>2</sup> unit; and
- General contractors are less likely to schedule a small construction project (particularly a small DGS unit) over a larger construction project and as such, a premium may be charged in situations where a contractor is willing to take on a small DGS project.

For the families that constructed a DGS as part of the pilot, their reasoning for constructing a DGS was to keep their family close, and it was the most affordable option for both families living in the principal and accessory dwelling. To date there have been no complaints received regarding the properties that took part in the DGS Pilot Project.

As part of the DGS Pilot Project, a survey was conducted, which generated 96 responses. When asked if respondents support allowing DGS units to be up to 140m<sup>2</sup> (1,500 ft<sup>2</sup>) in gross floor area, and 94% of respondents indicated yes to supporting units up to this size.

The next steps outlined in the April 14, 2020 report noted that staff would be bringing forward a report discussing the following:

- Removal of Owner-Occupancy requirement;
- Allowing a maximum 140m<sup>2</sup> (1500ft<sup>2</sup>) DGS unit;
- Allowing a Secondary Suite and DGS on the same lot;
- Allowing a DGS size to be a minimum of 20.3 m<sup>2</sup> (219 ft<sup>2</sup>); and
- Allowing flexibility in siting a DGS on a lot.

### **Secondary Suite Regulatory Review – Options Report**

At the June 25, 2019 Council Workshop meeting, staff presented options to expand the secondary suite program to provide more flexible housing options for the community. Due to the anticipated change in Building Code, staff discussed allowing secondary suites in all single-detached and duplex zones in the Town Centre, allowing suites in townhouses and lock-off suites in apartments, as well as removing the owner-occupancy requirement. A copy of the June 25, 2019 staff report can be found in Appendix A. From this meeting, Council passed the following motion:

*That staff bring back a report exploring accountability mechanisms related to the Social Housing Plan and the matter of owner occupancy for secondary suites; and further*

*That the May 7th, 2019 Council motion directing the abeyance of a current bylaw enforcement issue related to the requirement of owner occupancy of a secondary suite be renewed.*

### **Removal of Owner Occupancy Requirement**

At the June 25, 2019 Council Workshop meeting, Council directed staff to explore the removal of the owner occupancy requirement and appropriate accountability mechanisms. A report outlining possible accountability mechanisms was presented at the September 17, 2019 Workshop, which Council gave direction to report back on a Good Neighbour Agreement. At the July 14, 2020 Workshop, staff presented additional details of the Good Neighbour Agreement and how it would increase a property owners' level of accountability. The amending bylaws to remove the owner occupancy requirement and implement of the Good Neighbour Agreement were adopted January 26, 2021.

### **BC Building Code Removes Barriers**

As of December 12, 2019, the BC Building Code (BCBC) changed to remove barriers to help encourage more affordable housing, including secondary suites. Previously, secondary suites could only be built in a single-detached home and were restricted to be a certain size. Currently, the BCBC allows for the construction of new secondary suites in more housing forms, such as duplexes and townhouses. Through the BCBC update, size restrictions for secondary suites have also been removed.

To further encourage the construction of secondary suites, the Province has also included an 'Alternate Compliance Methods for Alterations to Existing Buildings to Add a Secondary Suite' in the BCBC. These alternative compliance methods only apply to existing houses that do not currently contain a secondary suite. The aim of the alternative methods is to offer a greater range of design solutions for the construction of secondary suite units that is more cost-effective and still meets BCBC requirements. Some of the alternative compliance methods are related to ceiling height, doorway openings, and fire protection.

The alternate compliance methods create more incentive for property owners of older homes to ensure a new suite is inspected by local building officials, meets Provincial safety standards, and is registered with the local municipality. The BCBC has left open the ability for local governments to develop their own criteria for existing unregistered secondary suites, provided they develop this criteria using documentation similar to NFPA 101A "Guide on Alternative Approaches to Life Safety" produced by the National Fire Protection Association. Building staff will be reviewing this material.

### ***Housing Needs Report***

On February 9, 2021, Council received a Housing Needs Report, prepared by CitySpaces consultants, that provided an understanding of current and anticipated housing needs within Maple Ridge. As of 2019, every local government in BC is legislatively required to complete a housing needs assessment by April 2022, and every five years thereafter. The study conducted for the Housing Needs Report found that there is a growing disconnect between what is available and what is affordable to Maple Ridge residents. The study showed that the price of a single-detached home in Maple Ridge is becoming increasingly out-of-reach for dual-income households and there is a limited new supply of rentable units in Maple Ridge. Since the Housing Needs Report was presented to Council, benchmark prices of single-detached homes and townhouses in Maple Ridge have continued to climb, resulting in homeownership becoming more out-of-reach, even for dual-income households. Additionally, with limited rental units available locally, and throughout the Metro Vancouver region, rental unit rates are increasing and also becoming a less affordable housing option.

As part of the Housing Needs Report, a stakeholder workshop for the development community was held and the stakeholders specified that generally secondary suites have become commonplace in new builds. Representatives from the development community also specified that single-detached homes continue to be in high demand in Maple Ridge and secondary suites are increasingly popular in new builds, as this form can help close the affordability gap for families who need a mortgage helper to afford the cost of a single-detached home.

### ***Agriculture Land Commission Increases Residential Flexibility***

On October 26, 2021, Council received a report on the proposed changes to housing regulations in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) to increase residential flexibility. The Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) now permits:

- a secondary suite and detached garden suite on the same lot;
- a detached garden suite, up to 90m<sup>2</sup> (968ft<sup>2</sup>) if the total floor area of the principal residence is 500m<sup>2</sup> (5,382ft<sup>2</sup>) or less and on a parcel less than 40 ha (99 acres) (which currently aligns with Maple Ridge's maximum size for a DGS); and
- a detached garden suite, up to 186m<sup>2</sup> (2,002ft<sup>2</sup>), if the total floor area of the principal residence is 500m<sup>2</sup> (5,382ft<sup>2</sup>) or less and the parcel is 40 ha (99 acres) or more.

If the existing principal residence is greater than 500m<sup>2</sup> (5,382sq.ft.) and located on a parcel less than 40 ha (99 acres), an additional residence for non-farm use would not be permitted. It is noted that there are approximately six ALR properties within Maple Ridge that are greater than 40 ha (99 acres).

The City does not currently permit a principal dwelling size to exceed 500m<sup>2</sup> (5,382ft<sup>2</sup>) within the ALR, regardless of parcel size, nor does the City permit detached garden suites up to 186m<sup>2</sup> (2,002ft<sup>2</sup>) (the maximum permitted DGS size permitted in the Zoning Bylaw is 90m<sup>2</sup>). Nonetheless, the Zoning Bylaw currently prohibits secondary suites and detached garden suites from being on the same lot, regardless of whether the property is within the ALR.

## 2.0 DISCUSSION:

Maple Ridge has historically been an appealing municipality for young families. Younger residents (aged 19 years or younger) comprise 24.1% of the population, as compared to 20.5% in Metro Vancouver. With a larger proportion of children and teenagers, average household size is higher in Maple Ridge compared to most other communities in Metro Vancouver (2.7 persons per household as compared to 2.5 persons per household). However, the population trend is showing an increase in the senior population, which is anticipated to continue for several years, and although the proportion of younger residents is expected to decline this population will likely remain above the regional average.

To maintain a vibrant and thriving City, Maple Ridge needs to be able to attract and retain working households and enable them to grow and age in place. Encouraging the development of rental housing that can meet the needs of families and larger households will help ensure Maple Ridge can be family-friendly into the future. However, the Housing Needs Report, discussed in Section 1.2 above, identified a growing disconnect between what housing forms are available and affordable to meet the needs of Maple Ridge residents.

### 2.1 Market Update – Home Ownership

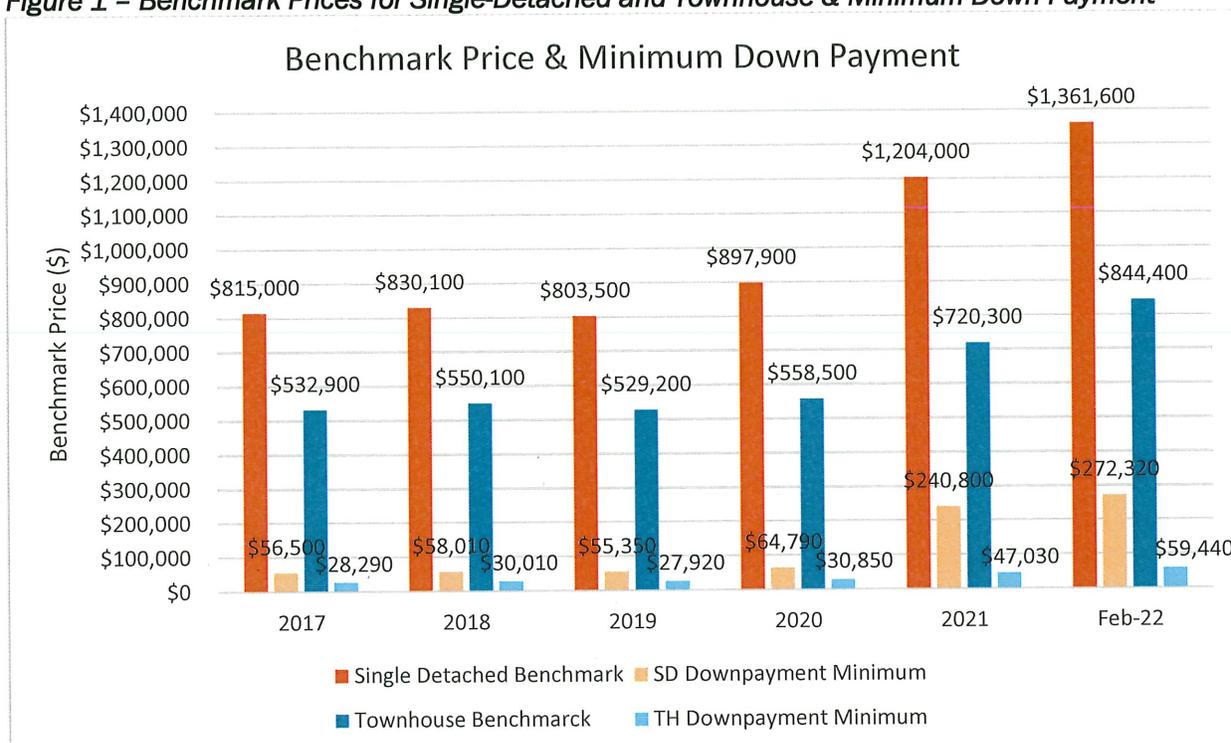
Through research and public consultation for the Housing Needs Report it was learned that the price of a single-detached home in Maple Ridge is increasingly out-of-reach for local dual-income households. The Report discusses two ways in which single-detached homes are becoming out-of-reach: 1) the mortgage versus income and; 2) required down payment. Ultimately, the income of owner households in Maple Ridge has not increased at the same rate as housing prices.

The Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver benchmark prices from 2017, as seen in Figure 1 below, suggests that the benchmark price for single-detached homes has continued to increase over 2020 and 2021. As of February 2022, the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver notes the benchmark price for a single-detached home in Maple Ridge as \$1,361,600, which is almost three times the value of the benchmark price of a single-detached home 10 years ago.

The Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver's 2022 Forecast projects that prices are expected to rise overall in 2022, but the price growth is not expected to match what was seen in 2021. The Housing Needs Report highlighted the trend that a single-detached home is increasingly out-of-reach for even dual-income households and with the real estate forecast projecting that single-detached home prices will continue to increase, it suggests that this trend may be affecting more Maple Ridge residents and families looking to move to Maple Ridge.

The median income of owner households in Maple Ridge increased by 11.7% from 2011 to 2016, while the benchmark price of a single-detached home in Maple Ridge has increased by 75.2%, resulting in a gap between what is available and affordable. In 2016, the median gross income of owner households in Maple Ridge was \$97,820, which was more than double the median income of renter households (\$44,797). Although the median income is expected to increase with the release of 2021 census data (to be released later in 2022), the median income of owner households in Maple Ridge is not anticipated to have increased at the same rate as benchmark prices for single-detached homes.

**Figure 1 – Benchmark Prices for Single-Detached and Townhouse & Minimum Down Payment**



Source: Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver \*2017-2021 benchmark prices taken from the month of November.  
 Benchmark Price: Estimated sale price of a benchmark property. Benchmarks represent a typical property within each market.

While single-detached home ownership is becoming increasingly unviable for dual-income households, townhouses are also trending towards becoming unaffordable. The Housing Needs Report stated that the benchmark price of a townhouse in Maple Ridge has increased by 103.9% between November 2013 and November 2019, from \$259,600 to \$529,200. As of February 2022, the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver’s benchmark price of a townhouse in Maple Ridge was \$844,440, which is an increase of 59.5% since November 2019. Additionally, this form of housing is often subject to additional strata fees and prohibited from mortgage helpers, such as secondary suites as per zoning regulations.

**Case Scenario #1 – Needed Income for Affordability**

In Canada, housing is considered “affordable” if 30% or less of a household’s before-tax income (gross income) goes towards the cost of housing. For a household to be able to “afford” a benchmark single-detached house in Maple Ridge (\$1,361,600, as of Feb 2022), the household would need to have an annual gross income of greater than \$340,000. This is based off of a \$5,000 mortgage payment for a single-detached home in Maple Ridge (\$1,361,600 at a mortgage rate of 2.84%), and this purchase would likely be for an older home that would typically generate more maintenance costs at the outset.

This benchmark of affordability will continue to move as housing sale prices and interest rates continue to rise. For example, if the benchmark price for a single-detached house remained the same (as Feb. 2022) and interest rates were to go up 2% (for a mortgage rate of 4.84%), a monthly mortgage would jump to approximately \$6,200/per month. For a mortgage of \$6,200/month to be “affordable”, the annual gross household income would have to be approximately \$523,000.

An increase in mortgage payments can negatively impact households financially, especially those still in the low earning years of their careers (and may also have children) or on a fixed pension income.

**Case Scenario #2 – Saving for Down Payment**

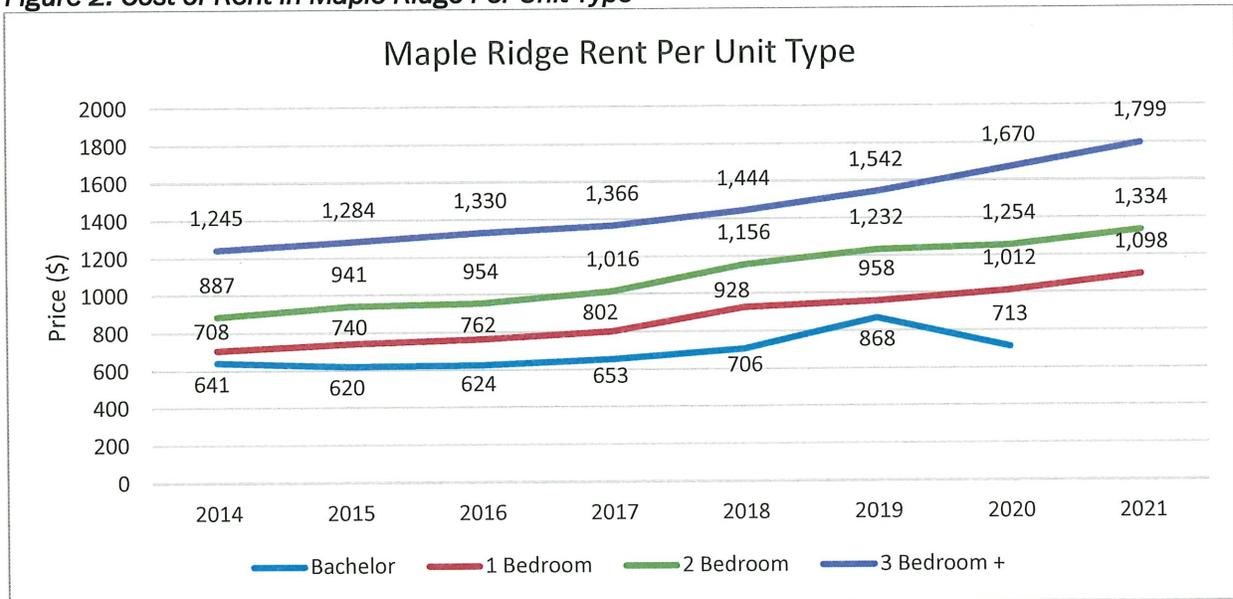
Saving for a down payment is taking residents longer, especially if the purchase price of a home is over \$1,000,000, as the sale price of housing has increased at a faster rate than income. In Canada, if the purchase price is \$1,000,000 or more, the minimum down payment is 20%. For a household that has a gross income of \$116,000 (net income approximately \$83,000), it would take the household 6 to 7 years to save the minimum down payment required for a benchmark single-detached house in Maple Ridge (being a down payment of approximately \$272,320). This gross household income is based on a wage increase of 2.9% per year, which was seen in the years from 2011 to 2016 and the household saving 50% of their annual net income for a down payment (roughly equating to putting \$3,500 a month into savings). This example is also based on benchmark price of single detached housing not increasing over the next 6 to 7 years.

Nonetheless, in this example, should the household save enough for a down payment and be able to purchase a benchmark single detached house in Maple Ridge, the monthly mortgage payments may not be financially feasible.

**2.2 Market Update – Rental**

The Housing Needs Report highlighted that since 2006, average rents for all purpose-built units in Maple Ridge increased by 54%, from \$667 in 2006 to \$1,030 in 2019. For bachelor units, increases in average purpose-built rental prices were more substantial, at 74% (\$500 in 2006 to \$868 in 2019). Figure 2 below shows the increase of rent per unit type for the last 5 years according to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

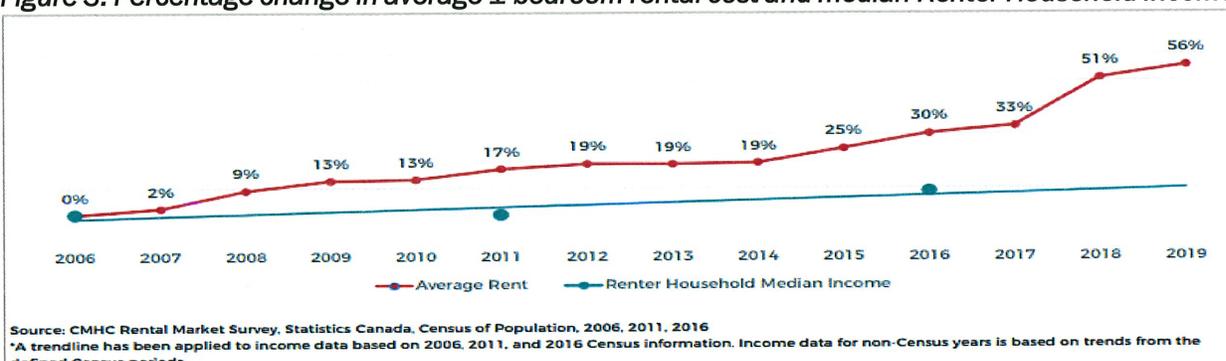
**Figure 2: Cost of Rent in Maple Ridge Per Unit Type**



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). CMHC did not provide the rental cost of a Bachelor unit in 2021.

Since the beginning of COVID-19, the rental market has changed substantially and data from October 2021 (the most recent CMHC rental information) is no longer indicative of what is happening on the ground. A market scan was completed in November 2020 for the Housing Needs Report, wherein average rents were found to be in the range of \$1,578, which is higher than what is reported by CMHC. When comparing the increases in average rents to increases in median renter household income, a gap begins to emerge. Similar to sale prices, rents have increased to a greater degree than incomes, creating a disconnect between what is available and affordable.

**Figure 3: Percentage change in average 1-bedroom rental cost and median Renter Household Income**



Source: Housing Needs Report, Figure 5. As of 2016, the median income of renter households was \$44,797 and the average rent was \$864/month.

Upon recent review of Kijiji and Craigslist listings, as of March 2022, the number of postings for available rental was extremely limited and the price range appears to have increased. Anecdotally, the number of postings of people looking for a place to rent almost equaled the number of postings for the rental units. The individuals posting for a place to rent often sited that they were seeking an accessible unit and/or an affordable unit for their family.

### 2.3 Recommendations to Assist Housing Affordability

#### **Recommendation #1 & #2 - Secondary Suite Regulatory Alignment and BC Building Code**

Due to the ongoing housing crisis, municipalities in the Lower Mainland are exploring ways to expand housing choice. With the change in building code and ALR regulations, a number of municipalities are adjusting their secondary suite programs. Table 1 shows secondary suite size requirements for various municipalities in the Lower Mainland.

**Table 1: Secondary Suite Size Requirements**

Municipality	Minimum Size	Maximum Size
City of Maple Ridge	37m <sup>2</sup>	40% of the floor area of building, up to 90m <sup>2</sup>
City of Abbotsford	N/A	100m <sup>2</sup>
City of Chilliwack	N/A	40% of the floor area of building, up to 90m <sup>2</sup>
City of Coquitlam	N/A	40% of buildings floor area (no square footage)
Township of Langley	N/A	120m <sup>2</sup>
City of Mission	N/A	40% of the floor area of building, up to 90m <sup>2</sup>
City of Pitt Meadows	33m <sup>2</sup>	40% of the floor area of building, up to 90m <sup>2</sup>
City of Port Coquitlam	N/A	40% of the floor area of building, up to 90m <sup>2</sup>
City of Port Moody	Removed maximum and minimum requirements	
City of Surrey	N/A	40% of the floor area of building, up to 90m <sup>2</sup>

The majority of municipalities do not have a minimum size requirement for secondary suites and four municipalities have already changed the maximum size requirement. Although Table 1 provides a snapshot of other municipalities secondary suite regulations, it does not tell the whole story. For example:

- The City of Chilliwack permits secondary suites in all residential zones where a single-detached house is permitted. This is permitted through a Council policy that supersedes the Zoning Bylaw.

- The City of Abbotsford's OCP sets policy to encourage a coach house and secondary suite on the same property. This policy is demonstrated through various residential zones that permit both accessory dwelling units on the same lot.
- The City of Port Coquitlam permits secondary suites on the same lot as coach houses.
- The City of Coquitlam allows secondary suites in all single-detached houses and duplexes (except for RTM-1).

As a step towards assisting property owners with housing affordability, this report recommends that staff be directed to prepare amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to remove the maximum and minimum gross floor area requirement for secondary suites to align with the BCBC, but retaining the 40% of the gross floor area of the building requirement to differentiate between a single-detached dwelling with a secondary suite unit and a duplex. Removing the maximum and minimum secondary suite requirements would allow the property owner more flexibility on how much square footage of their home can be converted into a secondary suite and the number of bedrooms provided.

Additionally, to encourage property owners to install a secondary suite in an older home, Building Department staff would be undertaking the 'Alternate Compliance Methods for Alterations to Existing Buildings to Add a Secondary Suite'.

### **Recommendation #3- Permit Secondary Suites in All Single-Detached Residential Zones**

The Maple Ridge Zoning Bylaw only prohibits secondary suites in two zones that also permit single-detached residential use: R-2 (Single-detached (Medium Density) Urban Residential) and R-3 (Special Amenity Residential). Currently, there are 1,976 properties in the City that are zoned either R-2 or R-3.

These two zones also have the smallest minimum lot area requirements in the Zoning Bylaw. The R-2 zone minimum lot area is 315m<sup>2</sup> and the R-3 zone minimum lot area is 255m<sup>2</sup>. It is the smaller lot area and parking requirement that is often cited for prohibiting secondary suites in these zones. However, as part of the Housing Needs Report, a stakeholder workshop for the development community was held and stakeholders specified that secondary suites have become commonplace in new builds, as the income from a rental unit can help cover mortgage costs or units are designed to be convertible into secondary suites. Homes that have a secondary suite already installed are the most affordable single-detached option in the City and are the starting point for most young families.

Staff have been made aware of unregistered secondary suites in the R-3 zone through various complaints or inspections. However, due to the zone not permitting secondary suites, the homeowner must remove elements of the suite (stove, cabinets, etc) and the renter is evicted. For the properties in the R-2 and R-3 zones that wish to have a suite and have lane access, the additional parking space requirement could be solved by adjusting the outdoor space requirement in backyards.

The key benefit to permitting secondary suites in all single-detached zones is seen in new developments. By permitting secondary suites, it enables a developer to consider the secondary suite requirements from the beginning of the process and address challenges through site and building design. This allows the new homeowner to either purchase a home with a legal suite or be able to put in a secondary suite shortly after purchase to avoid obstacles under the BCBC, as the suite is either already built or able to be built to current code. The R-3 (Special Amenity Residential) zone, which accounts for the majority of the affected properties (1,500 properties), should Council consider permitting secondary suites in all single-detached zones, have Development Permit Guidelines that could be updated to address any of Council's concerns.

#### **Recommendation #4 – Permit Secondary Suites in Ground-Orientated Duplexes and Townhouses**

The BCBC now permits secondary suites within ground-oriented duplexes that are divided by a vertical wall. The City of Maple Ridge permits duplexes in the RT-1 zone (Two-Unit Urban Residential), which permits either a single-detached or duplex use, but the zone does not permit a secondary suite for either use.

The RT-1 zone is permitted on lots that have a minimum lot size of 750m<sup>2</sup> or 557m<sup>2</sup> within the Town Centre Area Plan if on a corner lot or has lane access. Currently in Maple Ridge, there are 107 lots that are zoned RT-1 and none of these lots are less than 557m<sup>2</sup>. The majority of duplexes are on lots that are over 800m<sup>2</sup> in size, which is more than double the lot size of the R-1 (Single-detached Low Density Urban Residential) zone that permits secondary suites. Therefore, most of the existing duplexes should be able to accommodate two additional parking stalls onsite (one for each potential accessory unit). Permitting greater opportunity for duplex development, by aligning with building code and allowing suites in this housing form, would help provide more housing options within a single-detached neighbourhood.

Allowing a secondary suite in a ground-oriented townhouse development is becoming more common within Metro Vancouver and currently permitted in Burnaby, Richmond, Surrey, Vancouver, New Westminster, City of North Vancouver, and the City of Abbotsford is considering it in some zones. Affordability of townhouses is becoming more challenging and as the community's housing stock evolves towards more compact forms, creative options have surfaced to maximize the space and benefit of multi-family housing.

Rental suites within a townhouse unit are designed so that the unit will have its own private entrance, but within the ownership of and subordinate to the larger townhouse unit (see Figure 4). To ensure feasibility of a suite within a townhouse unit, a recommended approach is to only permit within new development so that the complex may be designed with appropriate unit design and sufficient parking for each suite unit onsite.

**Figure 4 – Secondary Suite in Townhouse Development**



Source: Vancouver Sun March 3, 2018

#### **Recommendation #5- Permit Lock-Off Suites in Apartments and Stacked Townhouses**

Suites in apartments and stacked townhouses are often referred to as "Lock-off Units" or "Lock-Off Suites". Apartment lock-off suites are permitted in UniverCity in Burnaby, as well as the same municipalities listed above for townhouse units. Generally, a Lock-Off Unit means a smaller Dwelling Unit immediately adjacent to a larger Dwelling Unit, and connected through a shared internal access that can be locked off from the larger Dwelling Unit; and must have its principal access from a common building entrance or hallway and be part of the same real estate entity (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5 – Lock-Off Suite in Apartment Unit**



Sourced from: *Small Houses: Innovations in Small-Scale Living from North America*, Small Housing BC

Similar to a lock-off suite in townhouse units, the same may be incorporated into select suites within a new apartment building as the required parking onsite would be designed into a proposed development project.

**Recommendation #6- Agricultural Land Reserve and Housing Regulation Alignment**

The Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) now permits secondary suites and detached garden suites on the same lot. With this recent change to Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) regulations, it is recommended that staff be directed to prepare amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to permit secondary suites and detached garden suites on the same lot where a single-detached residential use is permitted in the ALR. The zone amending bylaw would be drafted to align with the ALR's regulations regarding secondary suites and detached garden suites.

**Recommendation #7- Flexible Siting of a Detached Garden Suite on a Lot**

The Zoning Bylaw currently permits a detached garden suite in the rear yard, however, there have been several instances where property owners wish to pursue a detached garden suite in their side yard or front yard. Property owners that are proposing detached garden suites in their side yard often do not have enough space in the rear either due to the unique shape of a property or because of the Farm Home Plate regulations. For example, property owners in the ALR that have a house that pre-dates the Farm Home Plate regulations, may not be able to build a detached garden suite in the rear because the house is setback to far and/or the rear of the property is being farmed.

Criteria would be developed to allow a detached garden suite in the side and front yard as well as the rear to ensure neighbour privacy, safety, and DGS livability. This criteria would make up part of the zone amending bylaw and be accompanied by a staff report.

**Recommendation #8 Permit Smaller Detached Garden Suites**

The City of Maple Ridge permits detached garden suites on lots equal to or larger than 557m<sup>2</sup> and are zoned to permit a single-detached use. The Zoning Bylaw sets out placement and height requirements for detached garden suites, as well as a minimum and maximum size requirement. Currently, detached garden suites cannot be smaller than 37m<sup>2</sup> (398 ft<sup>2</sup>) and not more than 90m<sup>2</sup> (968 ft<sup>2</sup>) or 10% of the lot area, whichever is less.

When conducting the scan of nearby municipalities from Table 1 above, it became clear that every municipality has their own regulations for permitting detached garden suites (sometimes referred to as coach houses and garden suites or cottages). However, out of all the municipalities in Table 1, Maple Ridge is the only municipality to have a minimum size requirement for detached garden suites.

Anecdotally, the number of inquiries regarding a "small, detached, office space" has increased, which is likely due to COVID-19 and people working from home. Homeowners considering an onsite office use that is detached from the house currently have the option to either build a detached garden suite (habitable) or an accessory building (non-habitable). By removing the minimum size requirement for detached garden suites, it encourages property owners to build habitable spaces that create the option of being a rental unit for a future property owner. Additionally, these smaller units may be affordable rental spaces for low-income singles who can live comfortably in smaller units, such as post-secondary students and seniors.

### **Recommendation #9 Permit Detached Garden Suites Up to 140m<sup>2</sup>**

From the outcomes of the DGS Pilot Project process, it is clear that larger DGS units, up to 140m<sup>2</sup> (1500ft<sup>2</sup>), has been the most popular and desired component of the regulatory review. The larger unit component received significant community support through the public consultation process in 2017, generated the majority of inquiries through the review process and the DGS Pilot Project, and also received a high percentage of support from the DGS tours survey. The majority of inquiries regarding larger DGS units has been from families, who are looking to leverage one property between two households, to provide affordable housing options for parents and adult children (not to mention having each other close by to assist with childcare, home maintenance projects, etc.). This is viewed as a long-term option for families, as parents are often recently retired and want to remain in the family home for some years yet and the adult children are just starting out with young families and looking to get into home ownership. The desired family housing plan, often told to staff, is that when the parents are looking to downsize in the future, they will move into the DGS and their children and grandchildren will move into the larger family home. Helping to provide affordable housing for family members and enabling everyone to live within the same community and neighbourhood is becoming a less common option for young adult children and even seniors who cannot find a suitable downsizing home or can no longer afford to live in the community they consider home.

### **Recommendation #10 Permit Secondary Suites and Detached Garden Suites on the Same Lot**

The combination of building a secondary suite and a detached garden suite on the same lot, at the same time, provides economic synergies. Developing both a secondary suite and a detached garden suite on the same lot has been shown to reduce the period it takes to pay back the financial expenditure required to develop both suite types. This economic synergy offers a potential incentive to landowners to invest in creating more rental units in the City. Additionally, by permitting both types of suite on the same lot, it allows for a greater concentration of housing units while maintaining the single-detached neighbourhood feel. Ultimately, permitting both types of suites on the same lot, where infrastructure and resources already exist, is an efficient use of land and resources.

### **Recommendation #11 Create “pre-approved” DGS building plan templates**

Municipalities that have expanded their detached garden suite program (such as City of Chilliwack and North Vancouver) have also created design guidelines to assist with community compatibility. For example, guidelines usually include a range of designs for small, medium, and larger lots and have suggestions for corner or uniquely shaped lots. Staff are recommending going one-step further and develop pre-approved building plan templates for DGS units to further encourage property owners and fast-track the building permit process. If supported by Council, more information on this would be provided in a future staff report.

## **3.0 NEXT STEPS**

Based on the recommendations proposed in this report, the next steps include staff preparing amendments to the Zoning Bylaw for the options that Council would like to consider for adoption and then presenting preparing draft bylaws to bring to a future Committee of the Whole meeting. More information on each amendment would be provided in the accompanying staff report.

## **4.0 STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT**

Achieving long term sustainability through thoughtful planning and policy work is a Council priority, as established under the Growth pillar of the 2019-2022 City of Maple Ridge Strategic Plan.

## **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The proposed work is consistent with the Official Community Plan housing and neighbourhood policies and the Housing Action Plan. The accessory dwelling unit regulatory review options also assist with executing the endorsed Housing Action Plan strategies and may be an impetus for positive change for the Maple Ridge's housing affordability and diversity.

## **6.0 INTERDEPARTMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Should Council move forward with any of the recommendations to assist with housing affordability there would be a multi-department undertaking between the Planning, Engineering Department, Bylaw & Licensing Services, and Building Departments.

Bylaw and Licensing Services staff are preparing a report on secondary suite and detached garden suite enforcement, which will be presented at an upcoming Council Workshop.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Ownership of single-detached houses are becoming unattainable for Maple Ridge dual-income households and townhouses are increasingly out-of-reach. The limited supply of rental units is also creating a substantial housing cost increase within the rental market. To maintain a vibrant and thriving City, Maple Ridge needs to be able to attract and retain working households, for both owners and renters, and enable them to grow and age in place.

Secondary suites and detached garden suites are a key form of rental housing, as it allows eligible renters the ability to move into home ownership with the assistance of a mortgage helper. Additionally, this mortgage helper contributes to the rental supply, allowing rental housing to increase in availability. The Province has removed barriers to increase housing choice and affordability, however, municipalities must choose to align their Zoning Bylaw to expand where these key forms of housing are permitted. As a result, other municipalities in the Lower Mainland have expanded or are exploring ways to expand housing choice for their local residents through their secondary suite and detached garden suite programs and also viewing this approach as an efficient use of land and resources.

By removing the minimum and maximum gross floor area for secondary suites and permitting secondary suites in all single-detached residential zones, as well as duplexes and townhouses, property owners are afforded more flexibility on how much square footage of their home can be converted into a secondary suite and provide two and three bedroom units. Going one step further in permitting detached garden suites on the same lot as a secondary suite, would provide the opportunity for economic synergies for property owners and encourage greater variety of infill development forms, while maintaining the feel of a single-detached neighbourhood.

Maple Ridge became leaders in promoting housing choice in 1999 when the City developed its secondary suites program. The City, along with the rest of the region, is currently experiencing a housing crisis. This report is intended to open a discussion on housing options to help address the problem, through allowing various forms of housing that will offer more choice and opportunity, in homeownership and suitable rental units, within every stage of life.

"Original Signed by Krista Gowan"

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*Prepared by:* **Krista Gowan, MA  
Planner 1**

"Original Signed by Charles R. Goddard"

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*Reviewed by:* **Charles R. Goddard, BA, MA  
Director of Planning**

"Original Signed by Christine Carter"

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*Approved by:* **Christine Carter, M.PL, MCIP, RPP  
GM Planning & Development Services**

"Original Signed by Scott Hartman"

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*Concurrence:* **Scott Hartman  
Chief Administrative Officer**

The following appendices are attached hereto:

Appendix A – June 25, 2019 Workshop Report titled "Secondary Suites (SS) Regulatory Review- Options Report"



## City of Maple Ridge

**TO:** His Worship Michael Morden  
 and Members of Council  
**FROM:** Chief Administrative Officer  
**SUBJECT:** Secondary Suites (SS) Regulatory Review – Options Report

**MEETING DATE:** June 25, 2019  
**FILE NO:** 2018-339-RZ  
**MEETING:** Workshop

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

At the January 14, 2019 Workshop, Council directed staff to report back with information on options presented for Secondary Suites (SS) and Detached Garden Suites (DGS) at the February 6, 2018 Workshop. During the January Workshop Council expressed a desire to continue working on a regulatory review of SS, while a DGS Pilot advances towards public tours of DGS units anticipated for Fall 2019.

At the May 7, 2019 Workshop, Council passed the following resolution:

**That staff bring back the consideration of removing the requirement for owner occupancy in homes with secondary suites, along with appropriate accountability mechanisms, on June 25 and further**

**That the current bylaw enforcement issue related to this item be held in abeyance until after the matter is considered on June 25, 2019.**

This report presents an analysis of six options for Council to consider including in the current SS regulations, along with a discussion on adding parking stall dimensions for the onsite parking provision, as well as providing an update on the “hand holder” online program aimed at helping property owners navigate through the building permit process.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That staff bring forward a report outlining draft Zoning Bylaw amendments to explore the following regulations for secondary suite units, for review and discussion at a future Council Workshop meeting:
  1. Remove owner-occupancy requirement;
  2. Expand allowance of a secondary suite in all single-family residential zones (in Town Centre only);
  3. Allow a secondary suite in a duplex unit (RT-1 zone);
  4. Reduce permitted minimum secondary suite unit size to 20.3m<sup>2</sup> (219 ft<sup>2</sup>);
  5. Allow a lock-off suite in a townhouse development; and
  6. Allow a lock-off suite in an apartment development.
2. And That bylaw enforcement on the owner-occupancy requirement continue to be held in abeyance until after bylaw amendments are brought forward to Council for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading.

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

The review of current accessory dwelling unit programs (SS & DGS) has been underway since Fall 2017 and has included a public consultation process focused on the SS and the DGS regulations. The outcomes of the public consultation process were presented at Council Workshop on February 6, 2018. At that meeting, Council directed staff to:

- 1. Provide information on pilot projects to:**
  - a. Allow a Secondary Suite and DGS on the same lot;
  - b. Allow a DGS size to be a minimum of 20.3 m<sup>2</sup> (219 ft<sup>2</sup>); and
  - c. Allow a DGS size to be up to 140m<sup>2</sup> (1500 ft<sup>2</sup>) or 15% of the lot area, whichever is less.
  
- 2. Undertake further research and report back to Council on:**
  - a. Allowing a Secondary Suite in all single-family residential zones;
  - b. Allow a Secondary Suite within a Duplex unit (RT-1 zone);
  - c. Allowing a DGS in all single-family residential zones;
  - d. Allowing flexibility in siting a DGS on a lot;
  - e. Allowing 2-storey units and units above a garage in all DGS zones;
  - f. Allowing Tiny Homes as a permanent DGS structure;
  - g. Allowing Tiny Homes as a temporary DGS structure; and
  - h. Removing owner-occupancy requirement for Secondary Suites and DGS.
  
- 3. Undertake interdepartmental/stakeholder processes to:**
  - a. Review the building permit application process; and
  - b. Develop an approach for creating pre-approved DGS building permit plans.

As a reminder to Council, a DGS Pilot Project commenced in May 2018 and two proposed DGS units completed the regulatory and bylaw approval process. Both of these units are currently under construction. It is anticipated the two DGS units will receive preliminary occupancy by Fall 2019 and public tours of the units will commence shortly thereafter for a period of two months. A short survey will be prepared for all who tour the units to provide their feedback. Once the tours are complete an outcomes report will be prepared for Council and will include any recommended changes to the DGS regulations at that time.

## 2.0 OPTIONS FOR SS REGULATORY EXPANSION

At the January 14, 2019 Workshop, Council chose to continue exploring possible options for SS regulatory expansion and not proceed with a second phase of the DGS Pilot Project. After reviewing the SS options from the Fall 2017 public consultation process, six options that may be considered as possibilities to increase SS units within the community are listed below:

1. Remove owner-occupancy requirement;
2. Expand allowance of a secondary suite in all single-family residential zones (in Town Centre only);
3. Allow a secondary suite in a duplex unit (RT-1 zone);
4. Reduce permitted minimum secondary suite unit size to 20.3m<sup>2</sup> (219 ft<sup>2</sup>);
5. Allow a lock-off suite in a townhouse development; and
6. Allow a lock-off suite in an apartment development.

These options are included in an Alternative Decision Matrix for Council's consideration in Appendix A.

Community support for options 2 through 4 was indicated (i.e. <50%) through the survey results from the review process. While community support was not indicated from the survey results for option 1, 5, or 6 above, they are included for discussion and consideration, as these three options are growing in acceptance throughout the Metro Vancouver Region. Additionally, Council passed a resolution to consider option 1 (removal of the owner-occupancy requirement) at the May 7, 2019 Workshop if property accountability mechanisms are put in place.

## **2.1 Remove Owner-Occupancy Requirement**

Currently, the SS regulations require that the property owner must reside onsite within either the principal unit or the accessory unit. Out of the six options presented in this report, removal of the owner-occupancy requirement will likely have the greatest effect on the registration of legal suites and on the creation of new ones.

As of May 2019, approximately 535 SS units are registered in Maple Ridge and relatively speaking, a small percentage of complaints regarding SS are received by the City each year. Through the 2017 public consultation process, respondents to the community survey showed a lack of support for removing the owner-occupancy requirement (36% support; 64% opposed). The comments received on this suggest a concern that if the property owner is not residing on the site, more problems may occur.

The owner-occupancy requirement for accessory dwelling units was discussed in a Council report presented at the September 19, 2017 Workshop. The Licences & Bylaws Department helped provide information on the number of complaints received by the City from 2013 through 2017. This data has been updated with more current numbers and are as follows:

- 2013 - 62
- 2014 - 67
- 2015 - 35
- 2016 - 32
- 2017 - 37
- 2018 - 27
- 2019 - 16 to date

It was noted at the time of the September 2017 report that the high number of complaints in 2013 and 2014 may have been in part due to the last secondary suite regulatory update in 2012/13. However, the numbers do show a steady decline in complaints since 2013 and generally the trend has continued.

In looking at the past three years at how many complaints received were related to an absentee landlord, the numbers are as follows:

- 2017 - 12
- 2018 - 12
- 2019 - 11 to date

It should be noted that while a complaint may be received on a SS, an absentee landlord issue may not be known until an investigation is undertaken by a bylaw enforcement officer and it is unlikely that the numbers above reflect any of these instances.

In reviewing the regulations of 16 other Metro Vancouver municipalities (see Appendix B), 10 do not require property owners to reside on the site. However, the City of Burnaby requires a business licence for absentee landowners and the District of West Vancouver requires absentee landowners to hire a property manager to oversee the rental units. Currently in Maple Ridge, property owners with a SS are required to reside on the site. However, this requirement is not proving to be an effective control for the secondary suites program, as it contributes to:

- a reduction in the number of registered suites, as property investors are less likely to purchase rental properties in Maple Ridge, and
- an increase in the number of illegal suites, as some property investors will not be deterred from purchasing and renting out a house with two unregistered rental units.

Respondents to the SS and DGS survey were not supportive of removing the owner-occupancy requirement, but adding to the community's rental stock and removing this deterrent to registering units may be a sound approach to creating housing affordability, choice, and oversight.

Under the current Business Licence Bylaw, landlords that rent out two or more dwelling units (i.e. either house, townhouse, and/or apartment) are required to obtain a Business Licence. Property owner contact information is required, including property manager contact if applicable. Additionally, a business licence must be updated annually and the City's Bylaws Department follows up with any that fail to do so. One update to the Business Licence Bylaw that may be worth considering, if the owner-occupancy requirement is removed, would be to require that absentee landlords, residing outside of the Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley Regional District boundaries, hire a property manager to oversee the rental units and respond to complaints. The intent would be to ensure that if there are any complaints related to a rental unit, a person who is located within a reasonable driving distance may be contacted to respond in a timely manner.

## **2.2 Expand SS to all SF Residential Zones**

When it comes to determining appropriate residential zones for permitting SS, some feel the primary limiting factor is sufficient space to accommodate the required one parking stall onsite. Currently, 371m<sup>2</sup> (3,993 ft<sup>2</sup>) is the smallest lot size wherein a SS may be accommodated within the principal residence, corresponding with the R-1 (Residential District) and CD-1-93 (Amenity Residential District) zones. Two single-family zones where a SS is not permitted are the R-2 (Urban Residential District) zone, with a minimum lot size of 315m<sup>2</sup> (3,390 ft<sup>2</sup>) and R-3 (Special Amenity Residential District) zone, with a minimum lot size of 213m<sup>2</sup> (2,293 ft<sup>2</sup>). Additionally, these two zones also permit the narrowest lot widths amongst single-family zones.

While a smaller lot size does present some challenges in adding a SS to a principal dwelling unit, a narrow lot width and smaller front yard setbacks make it less feasible to accommodate an additional parking space onsite in a tandem arrangement. The most common complaint received from residents regarding SS's have been from neighbouring property owners who are unhappy that onsite parking is not being utilized as much as on-street parking. For a small lot subdivision, this issue becomes more problematic due to having more driveways along a typical street front and less plentiful on-street parking at the outset.

One feasible option may be to allow suites in all single-family zones within the Town Centre Area and remove the onsite parking stall requirement for lots smaller than 371m<sup>2</sup> (3,993 ft<sup>2</sup>). All single-family designated areas within the Town Centre are within a 10 minute walking distance to either the Edge Street transit hub or the West Coast Express Station in Port Haney. In addition to quick access to public transit, the Town Centre offers a wide range of shopping and services making car ownership less of a

necessity and a suite in this area very attractive to renters without an automobile. There is an assumption within this option that car ownership is less likely for single individuals with a modest income. It may be worth considering restricting the configuration of the R-2 and R-3 Town Centre units to a bachelor suite or one-bedroom design.

It is important to note that the community survey results supported retaining the one onsite parking stall requirement. There are many areas within Maple Ridge that are not located within walking distances to local shops and services. In such, it is difficult to rely solely on public transit, retaining an onsite parking stall requirement outside of the Town Centre is prudent.

### **2.3 Allow SS in a Duplex Unit**

Until recently, the minimum lot size for a duplex, within most areas of Maple Ridge, was 891m<sup>2</sup> (9,591 ft<sup>2</sup>) with a minimum lot width of 22m (72 ft.). Most of the existing duplexes within the City would fit within these lot size parameters and easily be able to accommodate two additional parking stalls onsite (one for each potential accessory unit). In order to encourage more opportunities for duplex development, which provides a more affordable market housing option within a single-family neighbourhood, the minimum lot size was reduced to 750m<sup>2</sup> (8,073 ft<sup>2</sup>) and the lot width reduced to 20m (65 ft.). It is worth noting that even with the size reduction for the duplex lot, including a narrower lot width requirement, the minimum area is still more than double the smallest single-family zone size where suites are permitted (i.e. R-1 and CD-1-93) with greater front, rear, interior and exterior side yard setbacks. Given the total larger lot area and 40% lot coverage requirement, the provision of an onsite parking stall, per duplex unit, should be feasible in most instances.

The Town Centre Area Plan permits a smaller duplex lot size at 557m<sup>2</sup> (5,996 ft<sup>2</sup>) on a corner lot or a lot with lane access, which is less than half the size of the R-1 and CD-1-98 zoned lots. Even with greater exterior and interior side setbacks than the R-1 and CD-1-98 zones, the provision of an additional parking stall on these smaller lots will be challenging in many instances. However, a similar approach as described in Section 2.1 above, may also be considered, wherein Town Centre duplex units, on lots smaller than 750m<sup>2</sup> (8,073 ft<sup>2</sup>) would not require an onsite parking stall, if the unit is designed as a bachelor suite or with one bedroom only.

#### **2.3.1 Challenge with Constructing an SS within a Duplex Unit**

The BC Building Code is intended for new construction and meeting modern Code requirements can create a challenge for projects within existing buildings. While costs for an existing single-family resident (particularly an older home) may result in project costs that make it financially challenging for property owners to undertake a rental suite project, the challenge is greater for an existing duplex building.

A duplex with two SS's is considered a four-plex within the Building Code and triggers an upgrade to not only the construction and fire separations of the building but also the buildings mechanical systems. This would essentially create two separate buildings under the Building Code, allowing for the accommodation of a SS per each individual building. The cost related to retrofitting this within an existing duplex, particularly an older building, is not feasible. However, it is feasible to meet Building Code requirements in new duplex construction and worth considering as an option for these projects.

The Building Department has been working with the Regional Permits & Licences Committee, since 2014, on providing the BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing with technical information that supports allowing alternatives to the BC Building Code for existing buildings. Changing the Code to allow these alternate solutions would continue to ensure a high safety standard while easing requirements to help reduce construction costs for secondary suites in a principal dwelling unit and help reduce construction costs for both single-family and duplex units. While the technical information was provided to the Ministry in February 2019, no response has yet been received.

#### **2.4 Reduce Permitted Minimum SS Unit Size**

Through the SS and DGS review process, one option that was looked at is reducing the minimum allowable unit size to 20.3m<sup>2</sup> (219 ft<sup>2</sup>) for DGS units. This is the minimum dwelling unit size permitted under the BC Building Code. Additionally, permanent and temporary tiny home structures were also supported by survey respondents as potential housing options within Maple Ridge. While smaller unit size was not included as an option for the SS regulations, allowing smaller units is clearly resonating within the community and would enable greater affordability for single adults who choose to live small or are modest income earners.

Currently, the minimum unit size permitted for a SS is 37m<sup>2</sup> (398 ft<sup>2</sup>) and reducing this to 20.3m<sup>2</sup> (219 ft<sup>2</sup>) would help expand unit size options for property owners and ideally provide more affordable rental accommodations for those who have minimal space needs.

#### **2.5 Allow SS in a Townhouse Development**

Allowing a SS in a townhouse development is becoming more common within Metro Vancouver and currently permitted in Burnaby, Richmond, Surrey, Vancouver, and City of North Vancouver. It is also under study in New Westminster. Accessory dwelling units within townhomes and apartments are referred to as “lock-off” suites. As discussed in Section 2.3 above, affordability is becoming more challenging in both the market and rental housing sectors and each are stimulating a gradual decline in single-family housing development and increased growth in the multi-family housing sector. As the community’s housing stock evolves towards more compact forms, creative options have surfaced to maximize the space and benefit of multi-family housing.

Rental lock-off suites within a townhouse unit are designed so that the unit will have its own private entrance, but within the ownership of and subordinate to the larger townhouse unit. To ensure feasibility of a incorporating a lock-off suite within a townhouse unit, a recommended approach is to only permit within new development so that the complex may be designed with appropriate unit design and sufficient parking for each lock-off unit onsite. It is not anticipated that each townhouse unit within a complex would be designed with a lock-off suite, but a small percentage of units may be permitted.

**Figure 1: Lock-Off Suite in Townhouse Unit**

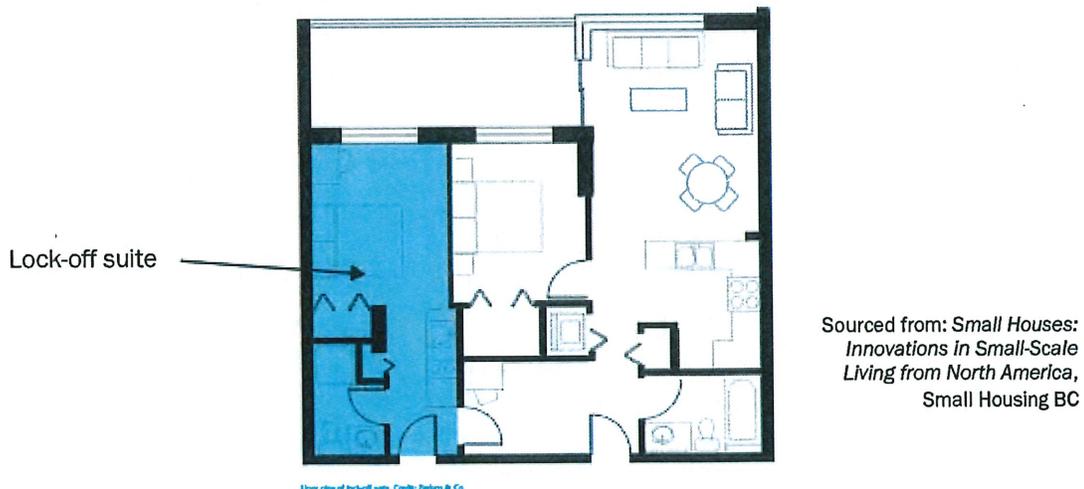


At this time there is some uncertainty as to whether a lock-suite is feasible under the BC Building Code. However, because examples exist within other Metro Vancouver municipalities, the issue will be studied further if Council chooses to proceed with this option.

## 2.6 Allow SS in an Apartment Development

Similar to a lock-off suite in townhouse units, the same may be incorporated into select suites within an apartment building. Consideration for this would be similar to lock-off suites within a townhouse complex, in that the number of rental units and required parking onsite would be designed into a proposed development project. Apartment lock-off suites are permitted in UniverCity in Burnaby, as well as the same municipalities listed above for townhouse units.

**Figure 2: Lock-Off Suite in an Apartment Unit**



### **3.0 ADDING REQUIREMENT FOR ONSITE PARKING STALL DIMENSIONS**

One additional control that may help reduce complaints from single-family residents living near rental units is to ensure that there is a requirement for parking stall dimensions for an accessory dwelling unit and that the stall is not permitted within the existing driveway, but on a separate and clearly defined parking pad located onsite. This would be applied to new SS and DGS applications only and building permit applications would need to show an onsite parking pad measuring 2.5m x 5.5m (which aligns with the Parking Bylaw) and the utilization of permeable materials.

Incorporating this parking refinement into the SS and DGS regulations will help to clearly define and confirm an onsite parking stall for renters and assist the Licences & Bylaws Department when responding to complaints that onsite parking is not being utilized.

### **4.0 UPDATE ON "HAND HOLDER" PROGRAM**

The February 6, 2018 report to Council identified that property owners who have undertaken an accessory dwelling unit construction project found the building permit process difficult to navigate. Subsequently, the Planning, Building, and Information Technology Departments have been working together on creating a "hand holder" online program that will help property owners gather key information for their property and generate a list of requirements, specific to their intended construction project. The "hand holder" program will initially be launched for property owners planning to construct a SS or DGS unit and eventually expanded for various projects, including accessory garage, workshop, finished basement, single-family dwelling and ultimately larger multi-family and commercial development projects. Regular updates to Council on progress with this project will be provided by the Planning, Building and Information Technology Departments.

### **5.0 NEXT STEPS**

Council may choose to proceed with any and all of the six options discussed in this report. The Alternative Decision Matrix, attached as Appendix A, may be utilized to select specific options and prioritize each for moving forward. Council may also choose to prioritize one or two options that could be brought back quickly with bylaw amendments. One example is to remove the owner-occupancy requirement, which will need the least amount of additional research and could be back in front of Council before summer break.

For the options selected and prioritized by Council, the next steps will involve preparation of a draft amendments to the Zoning Bylaw and if required, other related Bylaws. Preparation of bylaw amendments will also include input from the Building and Licences & Bylaws Departments. The draft bylaw will be presented to Council for further discussion and input received will be incorporated into a final draft for consideration of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Readings.

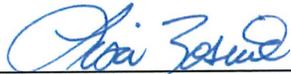
A contact list for those interested in following this review process was established during the public consultation process and has been updated over the course of this project. Email updates will be provided to those on the contact list as the Zoning Bylaw amendments proceed through the bylaw approval stage, including Public Hearing. Additionally, updates will be made to the project webpage and City Facebook page.

**CONCLUSION:**

As the Maple Ridge community continues to grow, many steps will need to be taken to address the issues of housing affordability and tenure while aiming to ensure a wide range in choice of housing form. Expanding SS regulations will help in the effort to make a housing purchase more affordable as well as providing more rental stock within the community. While all of the options presented will help create more opportunities for SS within Maple Ridge, it is likely the removal of the owner-occupancy requirement that will provide the greatest effect both in terms of an incentive to register existing suites and create new ones.

Preparing a draft Zoning Bylaw amendment for Council's review and input is proposed as the next step in the review of the SS regulations.

A second look at existing DGS regulations will be undertaken upon completion of the DGS Pilot Project tours, which will be followed by an outcomes report to Council.



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Prepared by: **Lisa Zosiak, MRM, MCIP, RPP**  
**Planner**



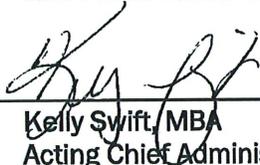
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Reviewed by: **Charles R. Goddard, BA, MA**  
**Director of Planning**



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Approved by: **Christine Carter, M.PL, MCIP, RPP**  
**GM: Public Works & Development Services**



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Concurrence: **Kelly Swift, MBA**  
**Acting Chief Administrative Officer**

The following appendices are attached hereto:

Appendix A: Alternative Decision Matrix

Appendix B: Table Showing SS Regulations in other Metro Vancouver Municipalities

## Secondary Suites Regulatory Review – Options Report

### Decision Matrix

No.	Option Proposed for Drafting Zoning Bylaw Amendment	Particulars of Proposed Amendment	Yes	No	Priority
1	Allow SS in all SF residential zones	Permit in R-2 zone 315m <sup>2</sup> (3,390 ft <sup>2</sup> ) and R-3 zone 213m <sup>2</sup> (2,293 ft <sup>2</sup> ) within the Town Centre Area only. Restrict unit design to bachelor suite or 1 bedroom unit. No parking stall requirement for these 2 zones in Town Centre Area.			
2	Allow SS in a duplex unit (RT-1 zone)	Permit in RT-1 zone, which will likely only be feasible in new development due to BC Building Code requirements. For units in Town Centre that are less than 750m <sup>2</sup> (8,073 ft <sup>2</sup> ), unit design will be restricted to bachelor suite or 1 bedroom and no parking stall required.			
3	Reduce permitted minimum SS unit size to 20.3m <sup>2</sup> (219 ft <sup>2</sup> )	Add wording to SS regulations.			
4	Allow a lock-off suite in a townhouse development	Only permitted in new development and in a small number of units. Require 1 onsite parking stall for units with lock-off suite.			
5	Allow a lock-off suite in an apartment development	Only permitted in new development an in a small number of units. Require 1 onsite parking stall for units with lock-off suite.			
6	Remove owner-occupancy requirement	Follow current Business Licence Bylaw, wherein a business licence is required for property owners with 2 or more rental units. Require that absentee landlords who reside outside of Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley Regions must hire a property manager to oversee the rental units and include contact information on business licence information. Note: business licence and contact information are currently updated annually.			

# Appendix B

## Scan of Secondary Suite Regulations in Other Municipalities

Municipality	Allow a SS & DGS on the same lot	Allow more than one SS on the same lot	Allow SS in all Single-Family residential zones	Allow a SS within a Duplex unit	Minimum Area	Maximum Area	Owner-Occupancy Requirement for SS & DGS	Allowing Lock-off Suites within a Townhouse or Apartment
City of Coquitlam	No	No	Permitted in most Single Family Zones	No	N/A	Lesser of 40% or 90 m2	N/A	No
City of Pitt Meadows	No	No	Permitted in RR, RS or R-1 Zones	No	33 m2	90 m2	Yes - Property owner must reside in either the main house or the suite or retain a local property management company	No
City of Surrey	No	No	Permitted in A-1, A-2, BA, RA-G, RH, RH-G, RC, RF-O, RF, RF-SS, RF-G, RF-12, RF-12C, RF-9, RF-9C and RF-9S Zones	No	N/A	Lesser of 40% or 90 m2	Yes - The owner must live on the property in either the main dwelling unit or the secondary suite.	Yes
City of Richmond	No	No	Permitted in Single Family, Two-Unit, Three-Unit and Townhouses	Yes, now permitted in two-unit housing, three-unit housing or town housing (2018)	33 m2	90 m2	N/A	Secondary Suite permitted in Town House
City of Delta	No	No	Permitted in RS1, RS2, RS3, RS4, RS4A, RS5, RS6, RS7, RD1 (only SFD), RD2 (only SFD), RD3 (only SFD), RA20 (only SFD)	No	33 m2	90 m2	Requires a Business License, unless the suite is unoccupied or is occupied by immediate family	No
City of Vancouver	Yes	No	Permitted in all RS zones	Permitted on lots larger than 511 m2	37 m2	Cannot exceed the size of the principle dwelling unit	N/A	Yes
City of Burnaby	DGS (laneway house) not currently permitted	No	Permitted in R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R9, R10, R11, R12, A1, A2, A3, and RM6	No	32 m2	Lesser of 40% or 90 m2	No, but requires a Business License if the not owner occupied	Yes, but only permitted in P11 at University
City of Port Moody	Yes	No	Yes, permitted in all Single detaches residential zones except for Manufactured Home Parks	No	N/A	Lesser of 40% or 90 m2	N/A	No
City of New Westminster	Yes	No	Permitted in RS-1, RS-2, RS-4, RS-5, NR-1, NR-2, NR-5, RS-CD-1	No	350 ft2 (32.52 m2)	Lesser of 40% or 968 ft2 (89.93 m2)	N/A	No, but research is underway
District of West Vancouver	No	No	Permitted in RS1, RS2, RS3, RS4, RS5, RS7, RS8, RS9, RS10, RD1, RD2	No	20 m2	Lesser of 40% or 90 m2	N/A	No
City of North Vancouver	Yes	No, unless it is a duplex (1 suite per unit)	Permitted in all SFD	Yes	37.16 m2	Lesser of 40% or 90 m2	Yes	Yes, accessory to a Townhouse or Apartment Use
District of North Vancouver	No	No	Permitted in all SFD	No	N/A	Lesser of 40% or 90 m2	Yes	No
City of Langley	N/A	No	Permitted in RS1, RS2	No	N/A	Lesser of 40% or 90 m2	Yes	No
Langley Township	No	No	Permitted in SFD (Zoning Bylaw does not define SS)	No	N/A	90 m2	Yes	No
City of Abbotsford	No	No	Permitted in RR, CR, SR, RS1, RS3, RS4, RS5, A1, A2, A3, A5, M11 and BMF zones.	No	N/A	Lesser of 40% or 90 m2	N/A	No
District of Mission	No	No	Permitted in RU80s, RU36s, RU16s, RR7s, S36s, R930s, R669s, R558s, R465s, RT465, RB558, CCR, SN1A	No	N/A	Lesser of 40% or 90 m2	No	No