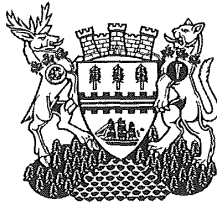


# Considered at Nov. 21, 2017 Special Council (COTW) Meeting

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## City of Port Moody Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: November 10, 2017 File No. 09-3760-01  
Submitted by: Planning and Development Department – Building, Bylaw, and Licensing Division  
Subject: Secondary Suite Task Force Recommendations

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### Purpose / Introduction

To report back on the Secondary Suite Task Force recommendations.

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### Recommended Resolution

**THAT staff prepare an amendment to the Fees Bylaw to implement the no fee business licence for the first year for property owners who register their new secondary suite as recommended in the report dated November 10, 2017 from Planning and Development Department – Building, Bylaw, and Licensing Division regarding Secondary Suite Task Force Recommendations.**

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### Background

At the March 7, 2017 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council passed the following motion:

CW17/057 (RC(CW)17/014)

THAT Secondary Suite Task Force Recommendations 1 to 12 presented in the report dated January 23, 2017 from Councillor Diana Dilworth, Chair, Secondary Suite Task Force regarding Secondary Suite Task Force Final Report be endorsed and referred to staff for action.

### Discussion

Included for reference is the report submitted by Councillor Diana Dilworth dated January 23, 2017 (**Attachment 1**), which listed the Secondary Suite Task Force recommendations to Council.

The recommendations from the report are listed below with the action taken by staff for implementation.

1. *Update the Port Moody Affordable Housing Strategy (2009) to align with other strategic plans, including Metro Vancouver's Regional Growth Strategy, Metro Vancouver's Affordable Housing Strategy, the City of Port Moody's Official Community Plan, and the City's Zoning Bylaw.*

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## Action

Staff will ensure the Affordable Housing Strategy is aligned with other strategic plans when the Affordable Housing Strategy is updated in 2018.

2. *Allow for relaxation of Building Code Standards for secondary suites that are existing, non-conforming, or built prior to the adoption of the current Code, where the suite still meets all safety requirements.*

## Action

The City does not have the ability to vary the requirements of the BC Building Code, however, the City may accept alternative solutions to the prescriptive requirements of the Code, providing it meets the intent of the requirement. For each enquiry and subsequent building permit, Building Officials will work with the individual property owners to determine what may be relaxed with respect to the prescriptive requirements of the Code in relation to existing houses or secondary suites, ensuring all life safety aspects are achieved.

3. *Explore potential amendments to the definition of a secondary suite in order to reflect the evolution of housing stock (e.g., duplex, triplex, carriage home, laneway home, etc.), and owner status (absentee owner versus primary residence).*

## Action

The definition of a Secondary Suite in the Zoning Bylaw is the same as the BC Building Code. Staff recommend keeping this definition to be consistent with other municipalities and to ensure the relaxations available in the Code may be used.

4. *In the City's Zoning Bylaw, add provisions to allow secondary suites in duplexes and townhomes where the building code can be met, is allowed by relevant strata bylaws, and can meet off-street parking requirements.*

## Action

Staff have included Secondary Suites as a permitted use in the RT1 zone in the draft Zoning Bylaw for Council's review. The allowance comes with a condition that a firewall must be built to the requirements in the BC Building Code for the additional dwelling units. This means that existing duplexes would not be able to use this provision, it would only be available to new builds. Without the construction of a firewall, the relaxations available in the Building Code for a secondary suite are not available to use; therefore, the additional dwelling units would need to meet the requirements of an apartment building, which is not likely feasible.

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5. *Consider, within Zoning Bylaw, allowing for a secondary suite and laneway house in RS1 zoning (two additional housing units in addition to primary house) where off-street parking requirements can be met.*

## Action

The draft Zoning Bylaw includes the allowance for all Single Detached Residential properties to have a secondary suite and a detached accessory dwelling unit. Each dwelling unit requires one off-street parking space to be provided.

6. *Explore implementation of an incentive for builders and developers to create infrastructure for secondary suites at the point of construction. This could include fee reductions and parallel permitting processes.*

## Action

An estimated 85% of new homes built in Port Moody include secondary suites. Staff feel offering an incentive is not necessary because home owners and builders are already constructing new homes with secondary suites. Where secondary suites are not proposed, it is standard practice for the Building Official to inquire with the owner as to their intentions and encourage constructing "suite ready" areas.

7. *Implement financial incentives for new secondary suite registrants and rebates for ongoing compliance. This could include an amnesty period for registration with a waiver or reduction of costs in the first year of registration.*

## Action

Staff have explored incentives offering a no fee business licence for the first year to property owners who register their new suite. Staff have determined the impact would be minimal to annual business licence revenue. Should Council wish to offer this no fee business licence for the first year to property owners with a new secondary suite, staff will prepare an amendment to the Fees Bylaw for Council's consideration at a later date.

8. *Simplify the existing fee program for secondary suites that charges both a Business Licence Fee and Utility fees, and develop one fee that covers the cost of managing secondary suites.*

## Action

Staff have reviewed this Task Force recommendation and are recommending against combining the fees for several reasons. Currently, the fees for business licences are reviewed annually and are payable at the beginning of each calendar year. Under recommendation 7, staff are recommending offering a no fee business licence for the first year. Combining the fee would make this incentive difficult to administer. In addition, staff are currently looking at the fee structure for water rates in the City, specifically for different dwelling unit types that include secondary suites. Staff will be reporting back to Council once more information is available regarding water usage in

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relation to the different types of dwelling units. It is for these reasons that staff are not recommending to move forward with this initiative at this time.

9. *Examine the current fee structure of charging double utility fees. Consider programs implemented in Pitt Meadows and Coquitlam that charge fees at either 40% or 100% based on the status of the secondary suite.*

#### Action

Staff brought this before Council at the Committee of the Whole meeting on October 17, 2017 as part of the 2018 Water Rates discussion. At that time Council directed staff to keep the fee structure for 2018 the same as 2017.

10. *Articulate how a comprehensive and effective Secondary Suite Program supports the Affordable Housing Strategies of the City of Port Moody and of Metro Vancouver.*

#### Action

This will be included with the update of the Affordable Housing Strategy scheduled for a later date in 2018.

11. *Update the City's Secondary Suite Guidelines document to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the registration process for both new and existing homes. Include an exhaustive FAQ section for ease of reference to respond to common questions.*

#### Action

The "Guide to Secondary Suites in Port Moody" has been updated and is included as **Attachment 2**. Staff are updating the City's Building Section web page to include Secondary Suite FAQs.

12. *Promote the program to ensure homeowners, renters, and builders are aware of details and implications of the City's Secondary Suite Program.*

#### Action

The Building and Communications teams will work together to develop a communications plan to inform property owners and builders of the benefits and implications of Secondary Suites in Port Moody.

## Other Options

THAT staff be directed to provide more information on specific Secondary Suite Task Force recommendations.

## Financial Implications

Should Council choose to offer a no fee business licence for the first year of suite registration, there will be minimal impact to business licence revenues for the City.

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## Communications / Civic Engagement

The "Guide to Secondary Suites in Port Moody" has been updated and is included with this report. The Building and Communications team will work together to ensure the updated plan is communicated to residents and the local building community.

## Council Strategic Plan Objectives

The recommendation in this report aligns with the Council Strategic Priority of Community Planning, specifically by contributing to the enhancement of affordable housing policies.

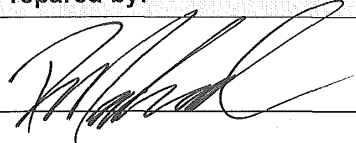
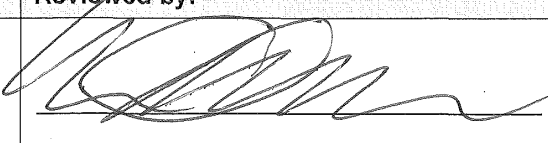
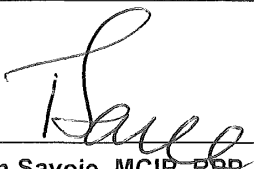
## Attachments:

1. Report dated January 23, 2017 from Councillor Diana Dilworth regarding Secondary Suite Task Force Final Report.
2. A Guide to Secondary Suites in Port Moody.

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<b>Prepared by:</b>	<b>Reviewed by:</b>
 Robyn MacLeod Manager of Building Bylaw and Licensing	 Eric C. Vance, FCMC, FCIP, RPP Acting GM of Development Services
<b>Reviewed for Form and Content / Approved for Submission to Council:</b>	
<b>City Manager's Comments</b>   Tim Savoie, MCIP, RPP City Manager	

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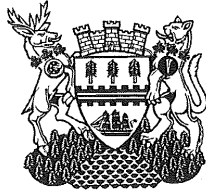
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## Considered at March 7, 2017 Special Council (COTW) Meeting

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### City of Port Moody Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: January 23, 2017

File No. 01-0370-20-22/2001

Submitted by: Councillor Diana Dilworth, Chair, Secondary Suite Task Force

Subject: Secondary Suite Task Force Final Report

#### Introduction

The City formalized a Secondary Suite Program in 2004 in response to resident concerns about the impact of unregulated secondary suites in their neighbourhoods and the City's desire to legalize such suites to ensure adherence to BC Building Code standards that meet fire and safety requirements. The program also addressed enforcement mechanisms and a fee structure to cover administrative costs of program implementation.

In 2015, Council supported a review of the existing Secondary Suite program by forming a Secondary Suite Task Force, with a focus on the currency of bylaws, equitability of associated fees and potential alternative fee structures, success of secondary suites as a form of affordable housing, and consistency with programs in other municipalities.

The Secondary Suite Task Force is pleased to present its findings and recommendations for Council's consideration in this report.

#### Recommended Resolution

**THAT Secondary Suite Task Force Recommendations 1 to 12 presented in the report dated January 23, 2017 from Councillor Diana Dilworth, Chair, Secondary Suite Task Force regarding Secondary Suite Task Force Final Report be endorsed and referred to staff for action.**

#### Background

It has been 13 years since the City implemented the Secondary Suite Program. On April 28, 2015, Council established the Secondary Suite Task Force and tasked the members with reviewing the relevant bylaws that regulate secondary suites in Port Moody and considering approaches for updating it. The Terms of Reference for the Task Force are attached as **Attachment 1**. The Task Force members met on four occasions and reviewed best management practices and fee programs being used in other communities.

The resulting recommendations focus on recognizing the value of secondary suites in contributing to the rental housing stock in the community, on providing incentives to support the retention and creation of new suites, and on reviewing the existing fee structure.

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## Considered at March 7, 2017 Special Council (COTW) Meeting

### **Report/Recommendation to Council**

Secondary Suite Task Force Final Report

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### **Discussion**

#### **Task Force Findings**

The Secondary Suite Task Force referenced the following key documents in their discussions:

- City of Port Moody Affordable Housing Strategy (2009);
- City of Port Moody Official Community Plan (2014);
- City of Port Moody Zoning Bylaw (1988);
- City of Port Moody Fees Bylaw (2015);
- City of Port Moody Business Licensing and Regulation Bylaw (2015);
- Metro Vancouver Affordable Housing Strategy (2016); and
- Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, Secondary Suite Bylaws and Policies Matrix (2014).

The City's Affordable Housing Strategy clearly articulates support for secondary suites in its three primary goals:

1. Promote and maintain a wide range of innovative housing opportunities to meet the changing needs of a diverse population of varying ages, income levels, family types, accessibility, and lifestyles;
2. Protect the stock of existing affordable rental housing in Port Moody; and
3. Enhance the continuum of housing and supports for the citizens of Port Moody who are at risk of homelessness.

These recommendations are consistent with the recently-released Metro Vancouver Housing Strategy. The Task Force recognized that secondary suites are a valuable source of rental housing within the City and can also assist residents in obtaining affordable home ownership.

The Task Force focused its research and discussions in three key areas:

#### **1. Supporting New Suites**

Discussion involved reviewing existing zoning bylaws, the definition of secondary suites, and where new secondary suites might be included, potentially in townhomes, duplexes, and on properties where laneway homes might also be constructed. The City of North Vancouver has implemented a program addressing the prohibition of secondary suites in duplexes by allowing for suites in duplexes that have constructed the necessary firewall infrastructure at the time of the building of the duplex.

There are opportunities, particularly in older homes, to consider relaxations on the need to meet current building code standards, as long as all health and safety conditions are met and fire inspections are undertaken. Both the City of Coquitlam and the City of Pitt Meadows have implemented programs that take this approach.

The role of builders and developers in creating new affordable housing stock was discussed. The Task Force felt that there was opportunity in providing incentives for secondary suite infrastructure to be included at the time of house construction or a significant renovation.



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### **Report/Recommendation to Council**

Secondary Suite Task Force Final Report

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Such incentives could include a building permit fee reduction or a parallel permitting program for the house build and secondary suite inspection.

#### **2. Equity in Costs and Charges**

It was recognized that, without a metering system in place, there is no way to determine the actual costs being incurred by secondary suites and all suite owners were being charged the same business licence fees and double utility fees.

The Task Force looked at the fee structures of other municipalities, which may include additional charges for water, sewer, garbage, and recycling, and an annual licensing fee. The fees charged are summarized in **Attachment 2**.

The Task Force did consider alternative approaches to charging utility fees to homeowners who have secondary suites. While implementing a metered system where homeowners are charged for actual usage would be the ideal approach, it was recognized that this is not feasible for the City at this time.

An option that was discussed by the Task Force was to look at the overall costs being charged for secondary suites and apportion the costs over all property taxpayers in the City, not just those that have suites in their houses. This would ensure an equitable approach to supporting secondary suites in the community.

#### **3. Compliance and Education**

The Task Force felt that it was important to support the legalization of existing suites and the creation of new suites. It was noted that residents may not be aware of the value of secondary suites in the housing continuum and there may be a negative connotation towards them. There is an opportunity to share information on the social value that secondary suites bring to a community as part of an education campaign.

It is being recommended that the City enhance its existing information on secondary suites, focusing on residents that may have an unregistered suite, homeowners that are considering creating a suite, and builders and developers. An enhanced guide to secondary suites should include more detailed information on the actual process of registering a suite and what needs to be done to ensure the suite meets all provincial building codes and City requirements. This information should be presented in a clear and easily understood format.

### **Task Force Recommendations**

The Task Force is proposing the following 12 recommendations for referral to and implementation by staff.

1. Update the Port Moody Affordable Housing Strategy (2009) to align with other strategic plans, including Metro Vancouver's Regional Growth Strategy, Metro Vancouver's Affordable Housing Strategy, the City of Port Moody's Official Community Plan, and the City's Zoning Bylaw.

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2. Allow for relaxation of Building Code Standards for secondary suites that are existing, non-conforming, or built prior to the adoption of the current Code, where the suite still meets all safety requirements.
3. Explore potential amendments to the definition of a secondary suite in order to reflect the evolution of housing stock (e.g., duplex, triplex, carriage home, laneway home, etc.), and owner status (absentee owner versus primary residence).
4. In the City's Zoning Bylaw, add provisions to allow secondary suites in duplexes and townhomes where the building code can be met, is allowed by relevant strata bylaws, and can meet off-street parking requirements.
5. Consider, within Zoning Bylaw, allowing for a secondary suite and laneway house in RS1 zoning (two additional housing units in addition to primary house) where off-street parking requirements can be met.
6. Explore implementation of an incentive for builders and developers to create infrastructure for secondary suites at the point of construction. This could include fee reductions and parallel permitting processes.
7. Implement financial incentives for new secondary suite registrants and rebates for ongoing compliance. This could include an amnesty period for registration with a waiver or reduction of costs in the first year of registration.
8. Simplify the existing fee program for secondary suites that charges both a Business Licence Fee and Utility fees, and develop one fee that covers the cost of managing secondary suites.
9. Examine the current fee structure of charging double utility fees. Consider programs implemented in Pitt Meadows and Coquitlam that charge fees at either 40% or 100% based on the status of the secondary suite.
10. Articulate how a comprehensive and effective Secondary Suite Program supports the Affordable Housing Strategies of the City of Port Moody and of Metro Vancouver.
11. Update the City's Secondary Suite Guidelines document to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the registration process for both new and existing homes. Include an exhaustive FAQ section for ease of reference to respond to common questions.
12. Promote the program to ensure homeowners, renters, and builders are aware of details and implications of the City's Secondary Suite Program.

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### **Report/Recommendation to Council**

Secondary Suite Task Force Final Report

January 23, 2017

### **Other Options**

THAT the report dated January 23, 2017 from Secondary Suite Task Force regarding Secondary Suite Task Force Final Report be received for information.

### **Financial Implications**

Any changes to the secondary suite fee program, enshrined within the Business Licence and Bylaw Enforcement section of the Fees and Charges Bylaw (2015), may have an impact on the existing revenue received through the collection of business licence fees and additional utility fees.

### **Communications / Civic Engagement**

If Task Force recommendations are supported, consideration should be given to holding public consultation to gather feedback from the community regarding potential implications of increasing the number of secondary suites.

The City's "Guide to Secondary Suites in Port Moody" will require updating to include the latest information, as well as information on the value of secondary suites within the community. The Task Force recommends that a detailed Frequently Asked Questions section be developed for inclusion in the Guide. Staff may also wish to create additional community materials, such as brochures for homeowners, builders, and developers considering the addition of secondary suites. Information on the risk of having non-compliant secondary suites should also be communicated to residents.

### **Council Strategic Plan Objectives**

The recommendations from the Secondary Suite Task Force align with the Council Strategic Priority of Community Planning, specifically by contributing to the enhancement of affordable housing policies.

### **Attachments:**

1. Secondary Suite Task Force Terms of Reference.
2. Summary of Fees.

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**Report/Recommendation to Council**  
Secondary Suite Task Force Final Report  
January 23, 2017

**Prepared by:**



Councillor Diana Dilworth  
Chair, Secondary Suite Task Force

**Reviewed for Form and Content / Approved for Submission to Council:**

**City Manager's Comments**



Tim Savoie, MCIP  
City Manager

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### City of Port Moody Council Committee Terms of Reference

Date: April 30, 2015  
Type: Short Term Select  
Committee Name: Secondary Suite Task Force

File No. 0370-20-22

#### Approvals/Reviews/Amendments

Approval date: May 26, 2015

#### 1. Committee Purpose

The purpose of the Secondary Suite Task Force is to review the currency of bylaws related to Secondary Suites and make recommendations to Council on the bylaws.

#### 2. Duties

The duties of the Secondary Suite Task Force is to review the present bylaws that regulate secondary suites in Port Moody and to consider all related matters, including but not limited to the following:

- History of the bylaws regulating Secondary Suites;
- Number of Secondary Suites registered;
- Equitability of the fees associated with Secondary Suites;
- Alternative ways to charge for Secondary Suites;
- City revenues from Secondary Suites and their impact on homeowners;
- Secondary Suite regulations in other municipalities in the Region;
- Success of Secondary Suites as a form of affordable housing; and,
- Other pertinent matters as determined by the Task Force.

Bylaws to be considered include but are not limited to the following:

- City of Port Moody Zoning Bylaw 1988, No. 1890, Amendment Bylaw No. 155, 2004, No. 2622;
- City of Port Moody Fees Bylaw, 2014, No. 2987; and
- City of Port Moody Business Licensing and Regulation Bylaw, 2015, No. 3000.

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## Considered at March 7, 2017 Special Council (COTW) Meeting

### **Council Committee Terms of Reference**

Secondary Suite Task Force

April 30, 2015

Attachment 1

### 3. Membership

- 3.1 The Membership of the Secondary Suite Task Force will be the following appointed pursuant to the Council Committee System Policy:
- One (1) member of Council as Chair;
  - Two (2) members representing the community-at-large; and.
  - One (1) member representing the Community Care Committee.
- 3.2 In addition to the voting members listed above, the following staff liaisons will support the Task Force in a non-voting capacity:
- One (1) staff member from the Financial Services Department;
  - One (1) staff member from the Building, Bylaw, and Licensing Department; and
  - One (1) Committee Clerk.

### 4. Operations of the Task Force

- 4.1 Meetings shall be called at the discretion of the Chair.
- 4.2 The Task Force shall produce a progress report for the Regular Meeting of Council to be held on July 14, 2015, and a final report with advice and recommendations on the bylaws that regulate Secondary Suites for the Regular Meeting of Council to be held on September 29, 2015.
- 4.3 Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the rules of procedure set out in the Council Committee System Policy.
- 4.4 The Task Force shall terminate upon completing recommendations to Council.

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### Secondary Suite Task Force Fees Comparison

2016 Utility Rates	Burnaby	Coquitlam	Port Coquitlam	Pitt Meadows	Maple Ridge	Port Moody
Water	\$ 572	\$ 475	\$ 427	\$ 431	\$ 553	\$ 403
Sewer	\$ 536	\$ 397	\$ 306	\$ 275	\$ 311	\$ 313
Garbage/Recycling	\$ 75	\$ 293	\$ 182	\$ 253	\$ 70 (no pickup)	\$ 321

### Total Fees for Secondary Suite Owners

Charge	Burnaby	Coquitlam <i>Unauthorized</i>	Coquitlam <i>Authorized</i>	Port Coquitlam	Pitt Meadows <i>Unregistered</i>	Pitt Meadows <i>Registered</i>	Maple Ridge	Port Moody
<b>Water</b>	@150% = \$ 858	@200% = \$ 806	@140% = \$ 564	@200% = \$ 854	@200% = \$ 862	@ 140% = \$ 603	@150% = \$ 830	@200% = \$ 806
<b>Sewer</b>	@150% = \$ 804	@200% = \$ 794	@140% = \$ 556	@200% = \$ 612	@ 200% = \$ 550	@ 140% = \$ 385	@200% = \$ 622	@200% = \$ 622
<b>Garbage/Recycling</b>	@200% = \$ 150	\$ 293 (no additional charge)	\$ 293 (no additional charge)	@200% = \$ 364	\$ 253 (no additional charge)	\$ 253 (no additional charge)	\$ 70 (no additional charge)	\$ 321 (no additional charge)
<b>Annual SS Fee/ Business Licence</b>	\$ 130				\$ 50	\$ 50	\$250 Onetime Suite Registration Fee (not included in total)	\$ 125
<b>Total Cost to Homeowners with Secondary Suites</b>	\$ 1,942	\$ 1,893	\$ 1,413	\$ 1,830	\$ 1,715	\$ 1,291	\$ 1,522	\$ 1,874



## ***A Guide to Secondary Suites in Port Moody***

Building Division

604.469.4534 • [www.portmoody.ca](http://www.portmoody.ca)



**This guide assists you in creating a new secondary suite.**

This document is for general guidance only. It does not replace bylaws or other legal documents.



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## Introduction



### What is a Secondary Suite?

A secondary suite is a separate living area contained within a single detached home. It functions as a self-contained living unit complete with a kitchen, bathroom, and a sleeping accommodation. It may share common space on the same floor with the primary residence; for example, a laundry room. The suite must not have a floor space greater than 90m<sup>2</sup> (968ft<sup>2</sup>) and 40% of the total floor space of the building. A secondary suite may not be stratified.



#### Do you need more information?

Building Division staff are here to help.  
Here's how to get in touch:

Phone: 604.469.4534

Email: [buildingpermits@portmoody.ca](mailto:buildingpermits@portmoody.ca)

Secondary suites expand the supply of lower cost rental housing, providing the opportunity for renters to live in lower-density residential neighbourhoods. They can offer rental housing that is affordable, ground oriented, and market based. It also offers opportunities for homeowners to downsize in their own home.

Like all housing, secondary suites must be regulated through the City. This guide is designed to help you understand the City of Port Moody's secondary suite program, and guides you through the permit process. It is for general guidance only, and does not replace the requirements of the British Columbia Building Code, Zoning Bylaw, or any other City regulation.

### The History of Secondary Suites:

In 1995, the BC Building Code was amended to include specific provisions for secondary suites. The amendments made a suite possible in a single detached home by reducing code requirements for things such as ceiling heights, fire safety provisions, and sound controls.

In 2004, the City of Port Moody amended its Zoning Bylaw to allow secondary suites in all single detached residential zones (except for Manufactured Homes Parks).

## Frequently asked questions



### Can I have a secondary suite in my home?

If you have a single detached home, you are allowed to have one secondary suite. The suite must meet the minimum life safety requirements required by the BC Building Code. Multiple secondary suites, or secondary suites in a separate building on your property, are not allowed. The following sections in this guide will help you to determine the requirements for your suite.

### I have an existing secondary suite within my home. How do I know if it was built with a permit?

To determine whether or not your suite was created with a permit, contact the City's Building Division at 604.469.4534. Building staff can search records to confirm if your suite was created with a permit.

### If my suite was created without a permit, what should I do?

Staff will work with you to obtain a permit, in order to ensure that the minimum life safety requirements are in place. These requirements are in place to ensure the safety of your suite occupants, as well as your family.

### What if I have a suite and no longer rent it out?

Contact the City's Bylaw and Licensing Division at 604.469.4541 to start the process of decommissioning your secondary suite. As part of the process, applicants must remove cooking facilities, remove bathing facilities, or create a permanent opening between the suite and the rest of the house.

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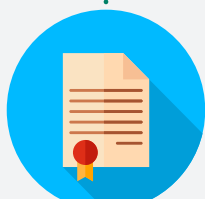
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## How does the approval process work for a secondary suite?



### 1. Apply for your building permit

- Along with your building permit application, submit two sets of floor plans showing the floor that contains the suite and its layout.
- Building staff will review the application, along with your floor plan. They will provide comments on potential revisions or issues.



### 2. Building permit issued

- Your permit will be issued once Building staff can ensure that the suite design complies with the BC Building Code's provisions for suites, and the City's Zoning Bylaw.
- You'll then need to schedule an inspection with Building staff. At that point, staff will identify any life safety issues that require addressing.



### 3. Suite approval

- Once Building staff have accepted a final inspection, your permit process is complete.
- Part of the final inspection is registering your suite. A basic business licence is required for you to rent out your suite.

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## City staff are here for you!



Take advantage of the City services available to secondary suite applicants!

### Technical Advice

Our staff will answer your questions about the suite program and steps you need to take to establish your secondary suite. We can explain what you need for a successful permit application, assist you in understanding the Zoning Bylaw and B.C. Building Code regulations, and provide guidance on good building practices.

### Plan Examination

Our staff will review your application and floor plan, and point out anything that does not comply with current regulations. Staff will work with you or your designer to resolve these issues.

### Inspections

Inspections are part of the permit process. You or your contractor will be responsible for ensuring the work is completed in accordance with the code, and ready for inspection at specific stages of the construction. Our Inspectors will assess the work, and point out anything that is not meeting standard regulations. Building Inspectors will be able to answer any technical questions you may have at that time, and provide you with an inspection report.

### Regulations

#### Zoning Bylaw

This City bylaw regulates land use in the City. It also regulates the size of the suite, along with parking requirements.

#### Building Bylaw

This City bylaw enables the City to regulate secondary suites through the use of permits and inspections. It outlines such things as when permits are required and how and when inspections shall be conducted.

#### British Columbia Building Code

This provincial code document contains the health and safety aspects of construction. The Code outlines minimum standards of construction, structural integrity, fire safety, plumbing, heating and ventilation, and many other aspects of buildings that we rely on. Although most people involved in the building industry are familiar with the Code, it is the property owner's responsibility to ensure that their home is in full compliance with the regulations.

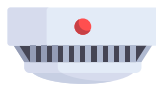


[portmoody.ca/bylaws](http://portmoody.ca/bylaws)

## What are the requirements for constructing a secondary suite?

A secondary suite must conform to the requirements of the British Columbia Building Code – section 9.37 Secondary Suites. The B.C. Building Code (B.C.B.C.) has adopted a number of alternative requirements for secondary suites in order to provide minimum health and safety standards for occupants without imposing undue costs to owners.

This guide does not encompass all of the requirements of the B.C.B.C. and its requirements for secondary suites; however, it is provided to assist in clarifying the most critical health and safety requirements of the B.C.B.C.



### Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms are required in each bedroom, and outside each bedroom, separating them from the remainder of the floor space, as well as on each floor. These smoke alarms are required to be interconnected within the suite, so that when one alarm is activated all other alarms within the suite will activate as well.



### Plumbing

Every dwelling is required to have a kitchen sink, a bathtub or shower, a bathroom sink, and a water closet. Additional plumbing fixtures installed to accommodate a secondary suite will affect the operation and performance of existing plumbing in other areas of the home. Drainage, venting and water systems must meet Plumbing Code requirements to ensure that an acceptable level of performance is maintained, and a healthy environment is provided.



### Fire Separation

In order to restrict the spread of fire and smoke from the suite to the remainder of the home in the event of a fire, a fire separation is required between the suite and the home. A fire separation can be made up of a wall and/or ceiling with drywall applied to it. Depending on the thickness and type of drywall installed, you may be required to install an additional smoke alarm system that serves the suite as well as your home. The additional smoke alarm that may be required would be a photoelectric type smoke alarm. It would be required to be installed in the suite and then interconnected to an additional photoelectric smoke alarm located within the main home (preferably located outside the bedrooms).

Doors installed in walls that are part of the fire separation must have labels confirming that they have a fire protection rating of 20 minutes and have rated self closing devices. All other openings in a fire separation are required to be tightly fitted.

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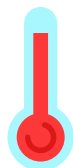
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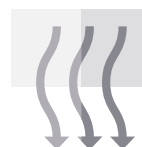
**Doors** – Both the secondary suite and the main home must each have at least one exit door that is at least 2'8" wide and 6'-6" high. Each exit door is required to open to the outside. If this is not achievable in your situation, arrange a meeting with our Building staff to discuss possible solutions.



**Bedroom Windows** – Each bedroom is required to have a window that opens to the outside, without any special tools or knowledge, to provide a second means of escape in case of fire. The window opening must be a minimum of 3.76ft<sup>2</sup> in area with no dimension less than 15" (i.e. 23"x 23" or 15"x 36"). Security bars are not permitted.



**Heating Systems** – Each room in the secondary suite must have winter heating. In order to contain smoke and fire, a secondary suite and the main house are not permitted to share a common forced air heating system. Existing secondary suites that are heated with a common forced air system may utilize an alternative approach, that would require fire dampers and additional smoke alarms.



**Ventilation** – The B.C.B.C. requires that each bathroom and kitchen be equipped with an exhaust fan vented to the exterior. A secondary suite requires a ventilation system that ensures fresh air is ventilated through the suite. There are different options as to how this can be achieved. One potential option is a passive ventilation system, which includes a principal exhaust fan that runs continuously (typically the bathroom exhaust fan) and fresh air inlets installed in each bedroom and main living area.



**Parking** – One additional off-street parking space for the secondary suite must be provided in addition to the space(s) required for the main house. The extra space for the suite must be contained on the property and not encroach on a public right-of-way or street. The extra space must also be independently accessible.



**Gas and Electrical** – Gas and Electric permits are required for any alterations to the respective systems. Permits must be obtained from Technical Safety BC (1.866.566.7233).



## Applying for a permit to construct a secondary suite



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*If you are hiring a contractor to conduct the work on your behalf, a letter of authorization is required from the property owner.*

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Along with your building permit application form, the City requires two floor plans to be submitted. Submitted plans are required to be drawn to an architectural standard. The following is a list of the information needed on these plans:

### Floor Plans

- A separate floor plan is required for each floor level where any work will occur;
- Clearly indicate the separation of the Suite from the remainder of the building with a bold line;
- Show all new framing details including beams, joists, lintels, posts, rafters, etc.;
- Indicate materials being used (i.e. ½" or ⅝" Type X drywall);
- Identify the use of each room on floor plan;
- Show and dimension all walls, windows, doors, skylights, stairs, decks, plumbing fixtures, fireplaces, furnaces, laundry equipment, and other appliances;
- Provide floor area calculations for the Suite and the remainder of the building;
- Identify all smoke alarms, ventilation fans, heating outlets, and air intakes.

### Elevation Drawing

Note: An elevation drawing will also be required if there are changes to the exterior of the building. (i.e. new doors or windows).

**If you don't have experience in drawing building plans, we recommend engaging a professional designer, or a registered professional familiar with the requirements of the B.C. Building Code.**

**Contact the Building Division at 604.469.4534 to see if there are plans on file that may assist you in your design.**

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## Permit Fees

A fee is due at the time of application. The remaining permit fee is based on calculated construction value, and is payable when the permit is issued and ready for pick-up. A Damage Bond may also be required. For more information on fees, please contact the Building Division at 604.469.4534.

## Related Fees for a Suite

If you are renting out your suite for additional income, you must obtain a home-based business licence from the City. The business licence for a secondary suite is the lowest basic fee for business licences in the city.

An additional utility fee will also be charged on your annual utility bill. This reflects the added consumption and use of City water and sewer services.

## Other Requirements:

A plumbing permit will be required if there are any alterations or additions of plumbing fixtures. Your plumbing contractor can apply for the permit after the building permit is issued.

## Booking your building permit application appointment

You must book an appointment with a City of Port Moody building official before submitting a building permit application. A meeting with a building official ensures all necessary information is captured so the City can process your building permit application faster. Here are the steps:

- 1.** Fill out a building permit application form, complete the applicable checklist, and then call 604.469.4534 or email [buildingpermits@portmoody.ca](mailto:buildingpermits@portmoody.ca) to book an appointment with a building official.
- 2.** During your appointment, the building official will check your application to ensure he or she has all the information needed to conduct a complete review. If information is missing, the official will provide you with a list of what's needed to complete the application process.
- 3.** When you have gathered all the information, a second appointment with a building official may be necessary to review the building permit application for completeness.
- 4.** Submit your hard-copy application directly to the building official during your first or (if necessary) second appointment. Since all necessary information has been included, the building official will be able to review your application without having to ask for additional details.

Gathering all the necessary information up front saves time, which means the City can issue building permits faster.



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## **Do you need more information?**

Building Division staff are here to help.

Here's how to get in touch:

Phone: 604.469.4534

Email: [buildingpermits@portmoody.ca](mailto:buildingpermits@portmoody.ca)

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This document is for general guidance only. It does not replace bylaws or other legal documents.

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