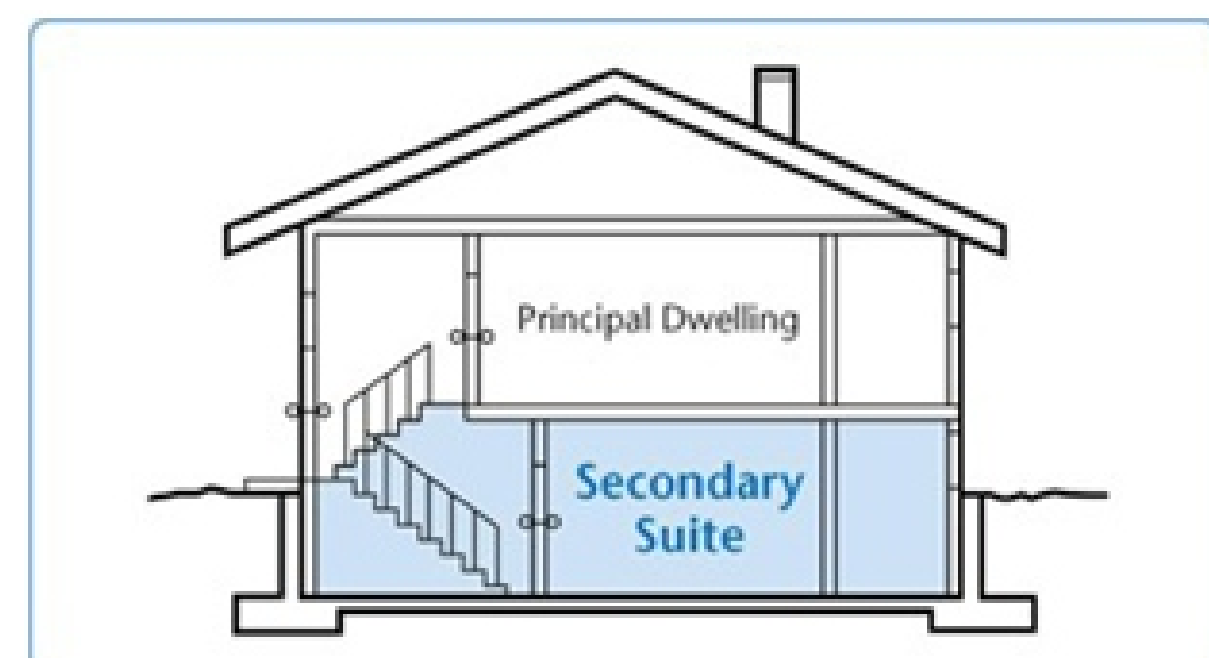


Proposed Secondary Suite Regulations

Secondary suites are regulated by Zoning bylaws, which are land use documents. In allowing secondary suites in the Regional District, staff reviewed a wide range of examples.

Suites are typically permitted within a single family dwelling and may include, but are not limited to, the following conditions:

- No more than one secondary suite per dwelling.
- A suite is only permitted where one principal dwelling is sited on the lot.
- The suite shall be for residential use only.
- The maximum size of the suite shall not exceed 640-970 ft² or 35-40% of the total floor area of the building.
- The minimum size of a suite shall be 430 ft².
- The suite shall have a minimum of 2 rooms, including kitchen and bathroom, but no more than 2 bedrooms.
- One off-street parking space shall be provided, in addition to the parking spaces required for the principal dwelling.
- The suite cannot be strata-titled which would allow for separate ownership of the suite.
- A suite may not be located in a mobile home.
- Shall not be used for short-term rentals (ie. less than a month)



Source: City of Nanaimo, Secondary Suites - A Guide to Zoning
[Http://www.nanaimo.ca](http://www.nanaimo.ca)

Secondary Suites

Many local governments are allowing legal secondary suites in areas zoned for single family dwellings. Secondary suites can provide many benefits to the community including:

For Homeowners:

- Mortgage-helper income.
- Extra income creates a better opportunity for young families to own a home.
- Provides a sense of security to seniors or persons with a disability.
- Allows families to provide a home for an adult child or elderly relative.

For Tenants:

- Offers affordable rental housing.
- Better safety standards than illegal suites.
- Can provide ground level accommodation that often results in a more desirable living space.

For the Community:

- Provides low impact densification of neighbourhoods while maintaining the character of the community.
- Increased density would better utilize existing infrastructure and protect green spaces by limiting urban sprawl.
- Expands the inventory of low cost housing without the high cost of government subsidies.
- Encourages diverse neighbourhoods.

What is currently permitted in the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District?

At this time, secondary suites are not allowed anywhere in the Regional District. The ACRD Zoning Bylaw contains provisions for secondary dwellings on larger properties but does not permit secondary suites in primary dwellings.

Where would secondary suites be appropriate?

While legalizing secondary suites in every residential zone across the Regional District is a possibility, they would be particularly beneficial in a few different areas:

- In Sproat Lake, allowing secondary suites in houses along the waterfront can provide income for home owners in an area where house prices have risen sharply in recent years.
- In areas of Beaver Creek and Cherry Creek, allowing secondary suites in neighbourhoods near the City boundaries and along the highway corridor would encourage increased density in areas close to city services.

Sources:

1 - City of Nanaimo, Secondary Suites in Accessory Buildings. <http://www.nanaimo.ca>

Secondary Suites - A Guide for Local Governments. Government of British Columbia, Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services
Secondary Suites - A Call for Safe and Legal Housing. Tenant Resource & Advisory Centre. <http://www.tenants.bc.ca>

Proposed Building Regulations

Building regulations make all development safer. Building regulations related to secondary suites will make them safer and limit their impact on the character of the community. These may include:

- The secondary suite must have a separate entrance/exit from the principal dwelling.
- No additions are permitted and limited exterior changes to the dwelling are permitted for a period of 5 years before, and after, the installation of a secondary suite.
- The building exterior shall be consistent with the character of single family dwellings in the neighbourhood.
- A hard-wired, inter-connected smoke alarm system must be installed in both the principal residence and the secondary suite.
- The secondary suite must comply with the standards of the British Columbia Building Code.

Secondary Suites in Accessory Buildings

Secondary suites may also be permitted in accessory buildings. Future requirements may include:

- No secondary suite exists on site.
- The lot is a corner lot;
- Laneway access is provided or;
- The lot is greater than 10,764 ft² (1,000 m²) in area.¹