



# FAQ

## Housing Initiatives

Frequently Asked Questions | April 2024

**Disclaimer:** This document is intended to be for information only. It is not a legal document and does not outline all applicable regulations. Any contradiction, dispute, or difference between the contents of this document and applicable Provincial law or Regional District bylaws, plans, policies, or guidelines will be resolved by reference to the law, bylaws, or other official documents.

- In November 2023, the provincial government passed legislation intended to increase housing supply and improve affordability in all BC municipalities. To achieve this goal, the BC government has made changes to allow more homes and offer different types of housing across the province.
- As part of the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District's (ACRD's) ongoing commitment to keeping our communities informed and engaged, and to work to enhance housing accessibility and affordability, we've created this list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) of the current and upcoming housing initiatives in the ACRD.

### Q: How will the new housing legislation passed by the province impact the ACRD?

A: There are several areas where the ACRD must immediately enact zoning and procedures for development approvals, plus a series of policy and bylaw changes to come over the next few years.

- **By June 30, 2024**, the ACRD must adopt zoning amendments to allow a secondary suite and/or a detached accessory dwelling unit (ADU) on all lots zoned for only single family residential use.
- **Public hearings are now prohibited** when a proposed zoning amendment for housing is consistent with an Official Community Plan (OCP).
- **By January 1, 2025**, the six (6) Electoral Area Housing Needs Reports (HNRs) must be updated to include a 20-year housing needs target, describe actions taken to reduce housing needs, and the need for housing in close proximity to multiple forms of transportation. Once the interim HNRs are completed, the reports must be updated every five (5) years thereafter.
- The six (6) current Electoral Area OCPs were adopted between 2007 and 2014, and only minor updates have been completed. Comprehensive updates to the OCPs will begin in 2024 as directed by the Board. Once completed, the OCPs must be updated every five (5) years thereafter.
- On April 5, 2024 new legislation included in Bill 16 was introduced for the implementation of new legislative tools around inclusionary zoning and density bonusing to support affordable housing development, works and services and transportation demand management, and tenant protection. If passed, the ACRD will have the option to implement these additional tools and may be required to incorporate new regulations once guidance is provided by the province.

**Q: How will the ACRD implement the new housing legislation requirements?**

A: In January 2024, the province provided grant-based funding to all local governments to support meeting the new legislated requirements. The ACRD received funding to support updates and revisions to the ACRD Zoning Bylaw, Official Community Plans (OCPs), and Housing Needs Reports. There is an opportunity to improve the Development Cost Charge (DCC) bylaws, and introduce an Amenity Cost Charge (ACC) bylaw to be used for additional amenities. The ACRD Board of Directors determines the priorities and adopts the bylaws required to implement the new provincial legislation.

**Q: Will the new legislation change any development processes and/or requirements?**

A: The new legislation does not change the rezoning process of a local government, with the exception of not holding public hearings for residential development consistent with an OCP. Processes and requirements, such as application fees, submission requirements, review by the Advisory Planning Commission (APC) and bylaw readings, are not affected by the new legislation. Rezoning applications that are consistent with area OCPs still involve a public process that incorporates neighbour notification and public advertising.

Additionally, development permit applications (i.e. form and character, environmental/riparian, hazardous conditions), servicing requirements (i.e. safe and adequate water supply and onsite sewage disposal), and building permits will still be required.

More information on Planning processes and requirements is available: [www.acrd.bc.ca/planning](http://www.acrd.bc.ca/planning)

**Q: What changes have been made to the requirement to hold a public hearing?**

A: New legislation has phased out one-off, site-by-site public hearings for housing projects that are consistent with area Official Community Plans (OCPs). All local governments, including regional districts, are now prohibited from holding a public hearing for proposed zoning bylaws if:

- An OCP is in effect for the area subject to the property being rezoned;
- The bylaw is consistent with the policies and objectives of the OCP;
- The sole purpose of the bylaw is to permit a development that is at least part residential; and,
- The residential component (if it is a mixed-use development) accounts for at least half of the gross floor area of all buildings and other structures proposed as part of the development.

**Q: Will the community have opportunities to comment and provide input on rezoning applications when public hearings are not held?**

A: Yes, the community will still have opportunities for public input on a proposed development, which will be advertised in the following ways: a sign posted on the subject property at the application stage, two consecutive newspaper adverts, direct mailout to neighbouring property owners and residents within 100 m of the subject property, and an agency and First Nation bylaw referral.

In addition, there will also be more frequent opportunities for people to be involved in shaping their communities earlier in the process, when OCPs are updated. These opportunities, including a public hearing, provide for more meaningful engagement opportunities for a greater number of community members to participate.

**Q: What changes are being made to allow secondary suites and/or accessory dwelling units on single family residential lots?**

A: The ACRD currently permits accessory dwelling units (ADUs), including secondary suites, on lots 0.4 hectare (1 acre) or larger within an OCP area. By June 30, 2024, a zoning text amendment must be made to ACRD Zoning Bylaw No. 15 to permit one secondary suite within the principal house (not detached ADUs or suites within an accessory building) on all lots less than 1 acre zoned for only single family residential use. This will exclude lots zoned to allow seasonal, recreational or vacation residential use such as the Salmon Beach (SB) and Vacation Home (RVH) Districts.

**Q: What updates need to be made to the Housing Needs Reports (HNRs)?**

A: By the end of 2024, the ACRD will update the six Electoral Area HNRs that were completed in 2021 to include:

- the total number of housing units required to meet the anticipated housing needs for the next five and 20 years; and
- a description of the actions taken to reduce housing needs since 2021, and information on the need for housing in close proximity to active transportation infrastructure.

More information on the HNRs is available: [www.acrd.bc.ca/housingneeds](http://www.acrd.bc.ca/housingneeds)

**Q: Are any changes being made to short term vacation rental regulations in the ACRD?**

A: No, the ACRD has not opted into the new provincial short term rental (STR) regulations. The ACRD STR Temporary Use Permit (TUP) Policy remains in effect, with the intent of this policy to provide guidance when considering TUP applications for STRs. The ACRD Zoning Bylaw does not allow commercial STR use in residential zones without a TUP.

More information on STRs in the ACRD is available: [www.acrd.bc.ca/str](http://www.acrd.bc.ca/str)

- The provincial principal residence requirement limiting STRs to the host's principal residence, plus one secondary suite or accessory dwelling unit, does not apply to regional district electoral areas.
- In 2024, the ACRD Board of Directors chose not to opt-in to require a person who offers a unit (a host) for STR (less than 90 days) to obtain a business license or to be registered under the newly-formed provincial registry. The next opportunity to opt-in to the regulations would be March 2025.

**Q: Who can I contact with questions about the ACRD and/or provincial housing initiatives?****A: Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD)**

ACRD Planning and Development Department | 250-720-2700 | [planning@acrd.bc.ca](mailto:planning@acrd.bc.ca)

ACRD office location: 3008 Fifth Ave, Port Alberni, BC V9Y 2E3

ACRD office hours: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm | Monday to Friday, excluding statutory holidays.

**Province of British Columbia (BC)**

Province of BC local government housing initiatives: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/local-governments-and-housing/housing-initiatives>

Planning and Land Use Management Branch | 250-387-3394 | [PLUM@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PLUM@gov.bc.ca)