

welcome

Secondary Suites within Apartments

INFORMATION
Open House

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Secondary Suites within Apartments

Come in and speak with staff

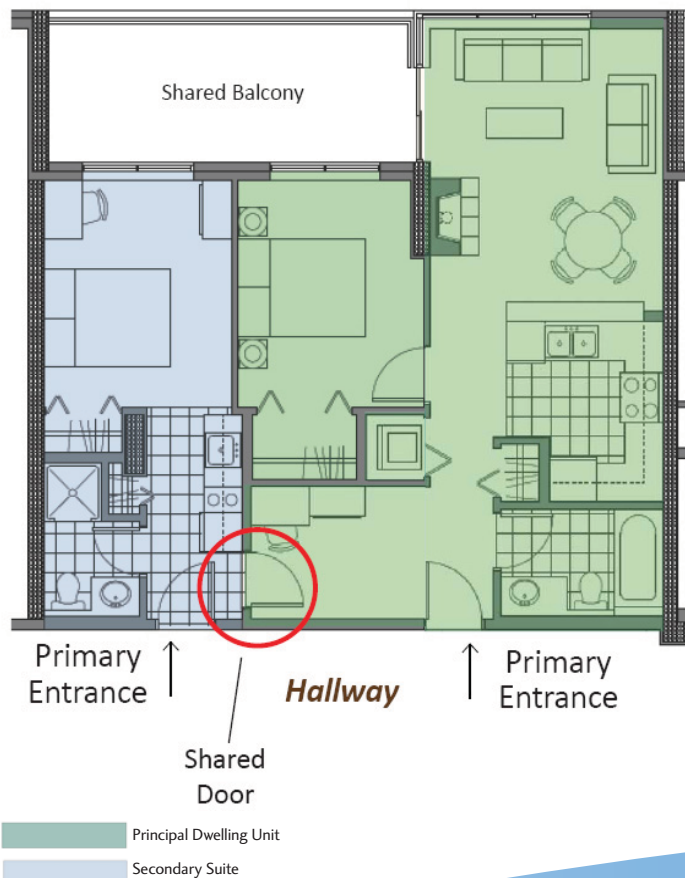
This Open House is intended to provide a preview of the Secondary Suites within Apartments proposal as preparation for the Public Hearing on July 21. At the Public Hearing, City Council will hear public feedback before making a decision on the proposal. Please have a look at the display boards and ask staff any question you may have!

WHAT IS A SECONDARY SUITE?

Similar to secondary suites within single-family houses, secondary suites within apartments are:

- Self-contained dwelling units (with kitchenette, bathroom, and living room/bedroom)
- Designed within a larger 'primary' unit (i.e. a 2 bedroom unit)
- Able to be 'locked-off' from the larger unit with a lockable connecting door
- Connected to the hallway or outside of the building by a separate door
- Can be rented separately or used as part of the larger suite

Example: Secondary Suite within Apartment
(Novo 1 unit from UniverCity at SFU)



Secondary suites within apartments extend many of the benefits of secondary suites within single-family houses into higher density, mixed-use areas, including:

- Increased affordability and housing choices
- Use of a secondary suite as a 'mortgage helper'
- Flexibility and long-term adaptability by design
- Sustainability through well-located and 'invisible' density
- Cost-effective means to co-locate with close family members or caregivers

WHY SECONDARY SUITES?

Secondary suites within apartments are a new housing type and a local innovation. Originally inspired by lock-off suites in resort hotels, secondary suites within apartments were introduced locally in the UniverCity development at SFU. These units have been popular with both buyers and renters and have received international acclaim for their creative approach to affordable housing design. More recently, secondary suites within apartments have been included in developments at UBC and by the City of Vancouver in the planning for East Fraser Lands, Oakridge Centre, and Arbutus Centre.

Secondary suites within apartments also responds to:

- Council priorities for affordable housing; and building strong, safe and inclusive communities
- EcoDensity Action C-6: “More Options for Rental Secondary Suites.” as part of a comprehensive effort to create an environmentally sustainable, livable, and affordable city

Responding to what we heard

Vancouver residents have told us that more options for rental secondary suites are needed in a variety of housing types.

Secondary suites are a form of ‘invisible’ density in terms of their impact on the physical character and appearance of a neighbourhood

Secondary suites can provide significant environmental and affordability benefits.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Secondary suites within apartments can deliver affordability and livability benefits if designed, located, and planned well. In developing the proposed policy, staff was guided by the following key principles:



1 Create affordability through design
Secondary suites within apartments can provide more affordable housing options through smaller unit size, transit-efficient locations, and ‘mortgage helper’ potential for apartment owners.



5 Allow flexibility for different building sizes and locations
Different buildings can accommodate secondary suites in different ways. Smaller buildings will have fewer units than larger buildings and buildings with amenities and open space can make smaller spaces more livable - regulations need flexibility to allow for variety of opportunities.



2 Enable for rental or family use only
Secondary suites should not be permitted to be subdivided and sold as separate strata units. By prohibiting separate strata titling, secondary suites will be available for rental or for family use only.



6 Experiment and Learn
Secondary suites within apartments are a relatively new and innovative housing type. Monitoring and learning from ‘on the ground’ experience will enable the City to adapt and ensure that secondary suites within apartments are a livable and viable housing type for the future.



3 Ensure good design for small space livability
Design guidelines should ensure livable suites, with minimum room width, natural light, efficient circulation, privacy, and security.



7 Minimize impact to existing rental
Secondary suites should not be enabled in areas of the City where existing rental housing stock is protected (i.e. West End and residential areas of Kits). Instead, locate suites on arterials (in close proximity to transit) and in the downtown.



4 Combine affordability with convenience
Secondary suites within apartments combine the affordability of secondary suites with the benefits of walkable access to transit, community amenities, local shopping, and other frequent destinations.

WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED?

Secondary suites within apartments will be permitted, provided they meet the following conditions to ensure fit, function, and livability. Proposed regulations include the following:

Unit Requirements:

Secondary suites within apartments must be self-contained dwelling units, including one complete bathroom unit and no more than one kitchen unit.

Strata Titling/Ownership:

The secondary suite can not be strata-titled as a separate unit or sold separate from the primary unit.

Parking Requirements:

- Vehicle: No additional parking spaces beyond what is required for the apartment building
- Bicycle: An additional bicycle space is required
- Car Share / Visitor: The secondary suite will count as a separate unit for future parking requirements

Relationship to the Primary Unit:

The secondary suite must be smaller than the primary unit, but a minimum ratio is not required.

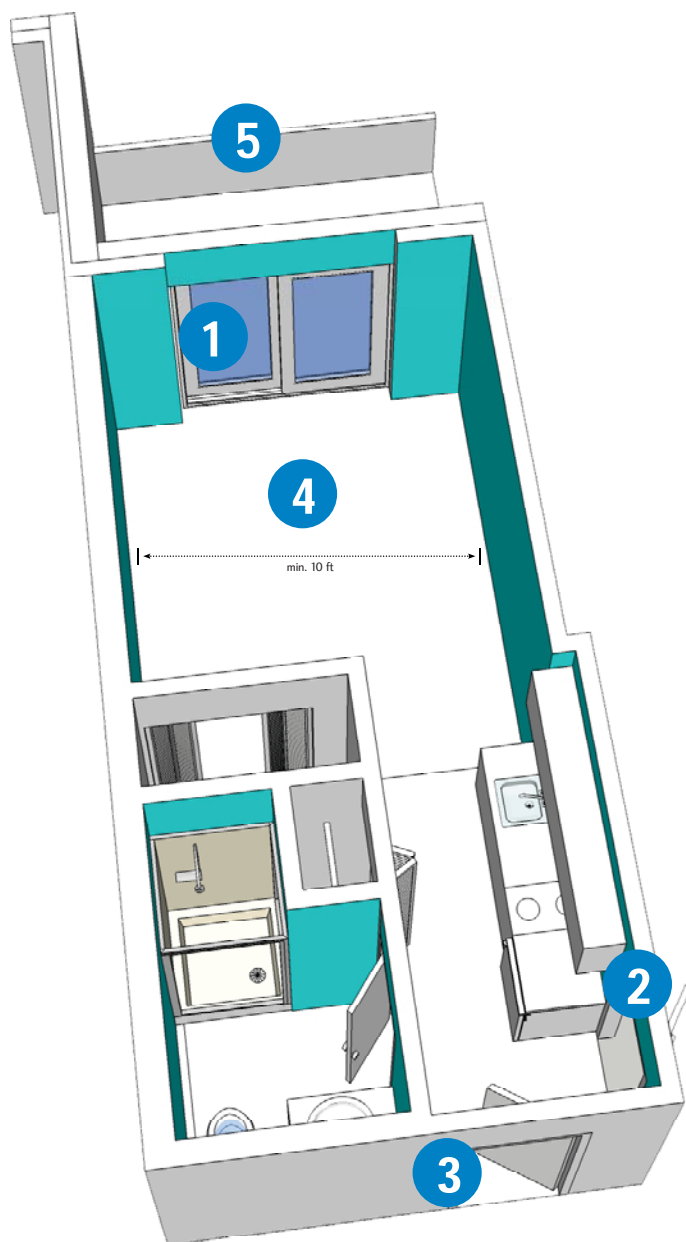
Minimum Unit Size:

280 square feet. The City may consider smaller units (with an absolute minimum of 205 square feet) if the design and location can ensure livable units.



DESIGN GUIDELINES

The design of any home is key to its livability and desirability, but even more so for small spaces. To ensure that secondary suites are livable housing choices, while allowing for flexibility in design, the following guidelines are proposed:



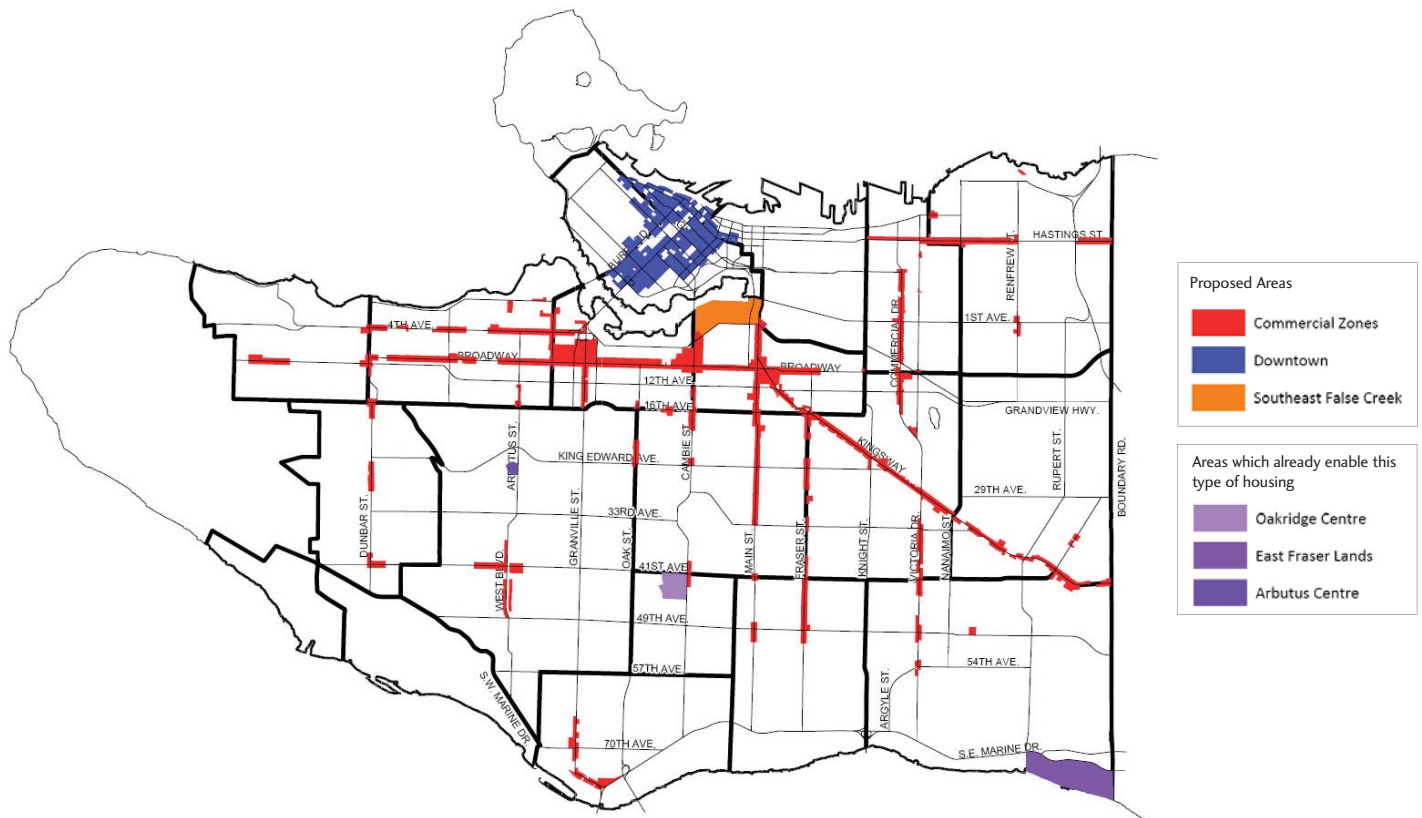
- 1 Light and Ventilation**
 - enough window area for adequate natural light
 - no habitable spaces without windows
- 2 Privacy/Security**
 - sound separation between units
 - separation of windows & entries
- 3 Access/Circulation**
 - access from unit to common corridor
 - spacing of doors
- 4 Internal Facilities**
 - minimum living area width of 10 ft.
 - complete bathroom unit & kitchen
- 5 Open Space**
 - usable private open space or
 - semi-private open space as amenity

sample secondary suite floor plan

WHERE WOULD THEY BE ALLOWED?

Secondary suites within apartments will be permitted in some Commercial zones, in residential areas of the Downtown District, and in new large-scale developments (i.e. South East False Creek). These zones are located in areas which:

1. Have existing higher-density and mixed-use character
2. Allow for sustainable travel (i.e. high transit frequency and excellent pedestrian and bicycle networks)
3. Have convenient access to community amenities, daily goods and services, and frequent destinations (i.e. educational institutions)
4. Have development capacity within existing zoning



Zones: C-2, C-2B, C-2C, C-2C1 and C-3A. Residential Areas within the Downtown District (DD) and, as a policy, in new Official Development Plans (beginning with South East False Creek)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q Will suites result in a bigger building?

A No. Secondary suites within apartments are an ‘invisible’ form of density with no increase in building area required or enabled through this proposal.

Q Will there be more people living in a building which has suites?

A In effect what is being created is the opportunity in a building for what would otherwise be 2-bedroom units, to be 1-bedroom units with a secondary suite. Some of the secondary suites will be used by the family of the primary unit, while in other situations the secondary suites are likely to be occupied by a one-person household.

Q How do suites help with affordability?

A Secondary suites within apartments provide more rental options and variety of size (including smaller units) in areas of the city with affordable transportation choices (easy access to transit, cycle routes, and destinations within walking distance). Suites also help with affordability by providing a ‘mortgage helper’ for families purchasing 2 bedroom or more units.

Q How many suites can there be in a building?

A There would be no minimum or maximum number of suites permitted in a building. As a new and innovative housing type, the demand for these suites is anticipated to evolve over time. We will monitor these proposals and advise Council should any changes be needed on the number of suites which may be allowed in a building.

Q Who will rent these suites?

A Due to their small size, these suites will not be for everyone. It is anticipated that these suites will assist in providing an attractive housing option for many people - students, elderly people, caregivers, and single individuals seeking to reduce housing costs.

Q If I own a unit with a secondary suite, do I have to rent out the suite?

A No. It is the primary unit owner’s choice to either rent out the secondary suite, or to use the suite for private or family purposes. It is likely that the use of the secondary suite could move in and out of the rental market depending on the needs of the primary unit owner.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q Will secondary suites be added to existing buildings through renovations?

A While the proposed amendments would permit secondary suites in existing apartment buildings, it could be expensive and technically difficult to do. New suites will need to comply with current Building By-law (i.e., fire and sound separation measures), and other code requirements. The new suite would also need to have its own access into the hallway and be designed to be livable (i.e., natural light, ventilation). All of this makes a secondary suite addition through renovation much more challenging to build in an existing apartment.

Q Will new apartment buildings be required to include secondary suites?

A No. Secondary suites within apartments are a new housing type which will be enabled in various commercial areas, residential areas of the Downtown District and encouraged as part of comprehensive planned areas including Southeast False Creek. Vancouver residents have expressed interest in this new form of housing and the development industry supports its feasibility.

Q How does a secondary suite relate to neighbourhood amenities?

A Secondary suites within apartments will be located in areas of the city already zoned for apartments and planned for higher density and intensities of activities. These areas also benefit from new residents, with walkable access to transit, shops and services, and have public spaces energized from increased activity. Further, as part of the overall building area, Development Cost Levies (DCLs) that fund new services and infrastructure will be charged.

Q How will parking be handled for secondary suites within apartments?

A Vehicle parking requirements for the building remain the same. However, recognizing that future tenants of secondary suites are more likely to use alternative (and more affordable) forms of transportation, additional bicycle parking will be required.

NEXT STEPS

Vancouver City Council will be considering zoning by-law amendments for this proposal at an upcoming Public Hearing:

- Date:** Tuesday, July 21
Time: starting at 7:30 p.m.
Where: 3rd Floor, 453 West 12th Avenue
City Hall, Council Chamber

If you would like to speak to Council at the Public Hearing, or send written comments in advance of the Hearing, please pick up a contact sheet with all the information you need.

Thank you for taking the time to attend the open house!