



## Urban Residential Zones Review Project Summary

The City of Pitt Meadows has begun a review of the sections regulating residential uses in the zoning bylaw (also known as Land Use Bylaw 1250). The purpose of this review is to:

1. Make the zoning provisions easier to use by eliminating redundancies, consolidating similar zones and clarifying wording.
2. Update the bylaw to reflect current realities, including revamping regulations regarding home occupations and eliminating the requirement for covered parking.
3. Ensure that the residential section of the zoning bylaw is consistent with Official Community Plan policies. This includes the consideration of secondary suites and infill housing, both defined below.

This review only concerns residential zoning provisions within the urban area of Pitt Meadows. Changes to zoning affecting agricultural areas are being done as a separate review. This information bulletin provides residents and property owners in the City with an overview of changes under consideration.

### City looking to encourage infill of new housing within the urban area

In the context of this review, “infill housing” refers to “one or more additional housing units on a lot previously occupied by or zoned for a single family dwelling”. It is small-scale redevelopment within an existing neighbourhood intended to add more housing to the community in a manner that does not negatively impact the existing neighbourhoods. The City’s 2008 OCP supports infill housing within Pitt Meadow’s urban area to provide greater housing choice, to increase population in support of local business and higher public transit use, and to more fully utilize existing City services. All applications for infill housing will be required to comply with the guidelines established for siting and design found in the OCP’s Infill Development Permit Area.

Since the majority of Pitt Meadow’s urban area is zoned for single family housing (R1, R2, R3, R4, or R5 zones), the City’s current approach to infill requires a rezoning to increase density from a single family home to allow a duplex (RD1 or RD2) or townhouse (RT1). Generally, this is not an approach that actively encourages infill

housing to take place because it's time consuming for City staff and Council and has a high degree of uncertainty for the property owner.

To encourage infill housing, the City is considering revising the zoning bylaw to allow a variety of infill housing forms (duplexes, coach homes, garden suites and townhouses) in addition to single family housing, under certain conditions. These conditions would include provisions that specify a minimum lot size, lot width and/or lot depth under which infill housing would be permitted. A rezoning would not be required. In addition to meeting the provisions for minimum lot size, width and depth, these infill developments would also be required to obtain an Infill Development Permit after meeting the guidelines for siting and design.

There are limited opportunities for infill to occur in Pitt Meadows that meet the minimum lot size, width and depth provisions, given existing development (there are no vacant lots zoned R1 to R5), with relatively new housing on urban-sized lots. Coupled with well maintained homes and high rates of home ownership, it is anticipated that opportunities for redevelopment of existing single family properties to duplex or townhouse are even further limited.

#### City considering the possibility of replacing Inlaw suites to allow secondary suites

The City is considering changes that would allow secondary suites in single family homes within the City. The City's 2008 OCP supports consideration of secondary suites in the City's zoning provisions as a way of providing affordable housing in the City and increasing population without significantly altering the character of neighbourhoods.

Under current zoning regulations, "secondary suites" are not permitted in any residential zone; however in-law suites are permitted in most residential zones. "Inlaw suites" are defined as a "self-contained suite within a dwelling unit in a building for single family residential use". The current bylaw requires that the occupants of inlaw suites be related to the homeowner and that homeowners obtain an "Inlaw Suite Occupancy" permit from the City.

#### *What is a Secondary Suite?*

The BC Building Code defines a secondary suite as an additional dwelling unit which:

- has a total floor space of not more than 90 square meters in area;
- has a floor space less than 40% of the habitable floor space of the building;
- is located within a building of residential occupancy containing only one other dwelling unit; and
- is located in and part of a building which is a single real estate entity.

Simply stated, a secondary suite is a part of a single family home set aside as a separate living area with its own bathroom and kitchen facilities.

#### *Recognition of reality – the benefits of secondary suite regulation*

Suites in single family homes which are not occupied by relatives of homeowners do exist in the City. It is estimated that about 170 of the 240 known suites are secondary suites – suites occupied by non family members. Permitting secondary suites recognizes existing conditions in the City and provides the means for the City to regulate their use, and ensure the safety of occupants and neighbours. The legalization

of suites would also allow the City to collect user fees to offset the cost of City services (including water utilities, for example) offered to secondary suite occupants.

#### *Conditions to be applied*

It is anticipated that with the provision for secondary suites, certain conditions would be applied. These conditions would include specifications to:

- **Meet the BC Building Code for secondary suites.** The BC Building Code sets out provisions for public health, fire protection and structural integrity. The City's building inspection services would ensure that these provisions are met. The City would require an application for a Building Permit and payment of a fee for this service.
- **Provide one additional off –street parking space.** Currently, each single family property is required to provide two parking spaces on their property. If a single family home also has a secondary suite, three parking spaces would be required.
- **Limit the number of secondary suites to one per single family home.**
- **Require the home owner to occupy either the main part of the house or the secondary suite.**

#### *What is involved in legalizing secondary suites?*

If the City moves forward with the legalization of secondary suites, further information will be provided to City residents and homeowners. This will include information on how to make the transition from an inlaw suite to a secondary suite, how to legalize existing secondary suites, and how to apply for a new secondary suite. The City will also develop an implementation program to deal with suite registration, incentives to register, service fees, inspection, and enforcement.

#### What's next?

Comments received from the community will be presented to City Council for review. Once Council has reviewed community comments and provided staff with direction, any changes to the bylaw will be prepared as an amending bylaw to Land Use Bylaw 1250. The amending bylaw will be brought forward to Council for adoption and further community input. This will involve a formal process which includes a public hearing at which time the community will have an opportunity to comment on specific aspects of the bylaw.

#### Do you require further information? Or have questions?

Please contact Dana Parr, Planner, at the City of Pitt Meadows.

Telephone: 604 465 2497

Email: dparr@pittmeadows.bc.ca