# Secondary Suite
## Information Bulletin

Revised: April 2025

## What is a Secondary Suite?

A Secondary Suite is a second dwelling unit that includes one or more rooms, is self-contained, and includes one kitchen and at least one bathroom. The suite is intended to be used by one household and is attached to and forms part of the structure that constitutes the single detached dwelling.



## Where are Secondary Suites permitted?

Secondary Suites are only permitted on properties with one of the following zoning designations, as per **Zoning Bylaw No. 0320**:

- Agricultural Zone, A1
- Country Residential Zone, RU1
- Rural Residential Small Parcel Zone, RU2
- Rural Residential Medium Parcel Zone, RU3
- Rural Residential Large Parcel Zone, RU4
- Rural Resource Zone, RU5
- Westbank Centre Compact Residential Zone, RC1
- Boucherie Centre Compact Residential Zone, RC2
- Compact Residential Zone, RC3
- Single Detached and Duplex Residential Zone, R1
- Large Parcel Single Detached Residential Zone, R1L
- Residential Plex Zone, RP1
- Comprehensive Development Zone 1 (Westlake), CD-1(C), CD-1(D) - (500 m2 minimum parcel area), CD-1(E)

To determine the zoning designation of your property, follow the link to the City's **WestMap** and turn on the Zoning layer.

## What regulations apply to Secondary Suites in West Kelowna?

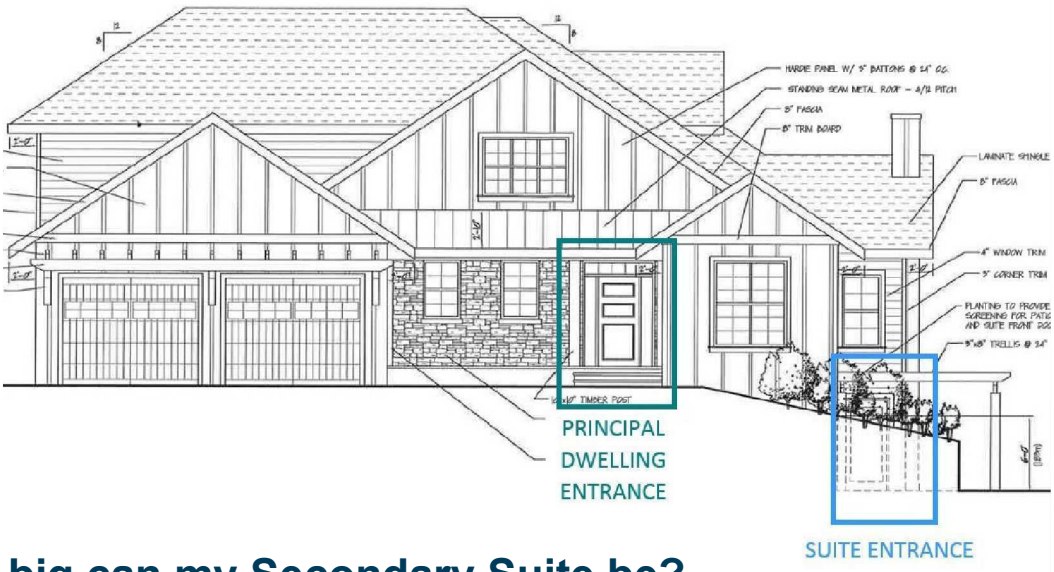
The general regulations governing the development of Secondary Suites in West Kelowna can be found in **Section 3.17 of Zoning Bylaw No. 0320.**

# Secondary Suite
## Information Bulletin

Revised: April 2025

## Where can the entrance to the Secondary Suite be located?

The entrance shall be a separate exterior entrance, subordinate to main entrance, and not face the roadway as the front entry to the principal dwelling unit.




## How big can my Secondary Suite be?

A Secondary Suite shall have a maximum gross floor area of 110 m2 (1,076.4 ft2) or 40% of the habitable floor area of the principal dwelling, whichever is less.

## What servicing requirements should be considered?

All Secondary Suites are required to be connected to **community sewer and water**. Where a connection is not available, the written approval of a Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioner (ROWP) for septic disposal capacity must be provided.

## Am I required to provide parking?

Yes, all required parking spaces must be provided within the boundaries of the parcel for which the Secondary Suite will be located, unless when permitted by Section 4.4.1(a) of the Zoning Bylaw. All parking spaces must be a minimum of 2.75 m (9.0 ft) in width by 6.0 m (19.7 ft) in length. For one-bedroom suites, one parking stall is required. For suites with two or more bedrooms, two parking stalls are required. Tandem parking (one vehicle behind the other) is permitted. A site plan identifying the location and dimensions of proposed parking is required to be submitted with your **Building Permit Application**.

# Secondary Suite
## Information Bulletin

Revised: April 2025

## What Permits and Licences may be required?

Depending on your site conditions and development plans you may require one or more permits in order to establish a Secondary Suite:

### Development Permit:

You may be required to obtain a **Development Permit** (DP) for new construction or site alterations on parcels located within one or more DP areas: Hillside, Sensitive Terrestrial Ecosystem, Aquatic, and Wildfire. The DPs ensure the protection of the natural environment and/or protection of people and property through the prevention of creating hazardous conditions during development.

### Building Permit:

You may be required to obtain a **Building Permit** (BP). BPs are required to verify that provincially mandated building code requirements are met to ensure safety of occupants. During the Building Permit process, you must ensure adequate servicing (water, sewer) is in place to accommodate a Secondary Suite.

### Road & Right of Way Usage Permit:

If you would like to create a new access/egress on your property in order to accommodate a Secondary Suite you must apply for a **Road and Right of Way Usage Permit**. Road and Right of Way Usage Permits are required prior to starting construction in a City Right-of-Way.

## What costs are related to the permitting and operating of a Secondary Suite?

The potential costs associated with the legalization of a Secondary Suite are identified in the table below. Some of the fees identified below are applicable in all circumstances while others are not. City staff are happy to assist you in determining which fees apply to your property. Applicable permitting fees are outlined in the City's **Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 0028**.

| Possible Requirement(s) | Related Cost (2025) |
|---|---|
| Development Permit | $1,110+ |
| Building Permit | Min. $150 |
| Municipal Highway Permit | $100 (access) |
| Sewer and water (quarterly charge) | 40% of flat rate charged to the principal dwelling |
| Garbage (quarterly charge) | $46.66 (contact Financial Services for suite waste options) |

# Secondary Suite
## Information Bulletin

Revised: April 2025

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### Can I use my Secondary Suite as a Short Term Rental or a Bed & Breakfast?

Short-Term Rentals (STRs) are permitted on parcels that contain a secondary suite, providing the zoning designation allows for that use. Detailed information, including application process and **Short-Term Rental Operator Guidebook**, can be found on the City of West Kelowna Website - **Business Licensing Page**.

### I'm only going to have family/in-laws stay in my Secondary Suite. Do I still need to get a permit?

All Secondary Suites, regardless of whether or not family members or in-laws are residing in them, are required to receive approval under the City's applicable permitting and registration program.

### What is an illegal suite?

An illegal suite is a Secondary Suite that has not been approved under the City's registration program and does not meet the requirements outlined in Zoning Bylaw No. 0320.

### How is a Secondary Suite legalized?

An application package must be submitted to the Building department to legalize an existing Secondary Suite or to create a new one. If all of the conditions are met, your property can be registered as having a legal suite.

### What penalties may apply to an illegal suite?

Potential costs associated with an illegal suite are:

- Failure to comply fines of $500 for offences related to owner occupancy, registration, renewal, and illegal use.
- 100% water and sewer utility fees.

### What if I live in a strata?

Strata approval is required for the construction of a secondary suite where applicable. Strata bylaws can further restrict zoning bylaws, but are not able to allow non-permitted uses.

### What is the permitting process and how long does it take?

Depending on your development plans, and permits required, approval times can vary. In circumstances where both a Building Permit and a Development Permit are required, these applications may run concurrently to reduce processing time.

# Secondary Suite
## Information Bulletin

Revised: April 2025

## Quick Summary

**Conditions to meet:**

1. Located only within a principal single detached dwelling, duplex or carriage house.
2. Maximum gross floor area of 110 m2 (1,076.4 ft2) or 40% of habitable floor area of the principal dwelling, whichever is less.
3. The entrance shall be a separate exterior entrance and not face the roadway as the front entry to the principal dwelling unit.
4. Not permitted without connection to a community sewer system unless the parcel receives the written approval of a Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioner (ROWP) for septic disposal capacity.
5. Required parking spaces for a secondary suite shall be accessed by a highway.
6. One parking space, located on the property, must be provided for each bedroom (tandem parking is permitted).
7. A Secondary Suite shall not be subdivided from the principal dwelling.
8. All construction requires a Building Permit.
9. A Secondary Suite must be permitted and registered.
10. Only rental periods of one month or greater are permitted.
11. Not permitted where a Bed & Breakfast exists.

**When conditions cannot be met:**

A property owner may apply for a variance if the following conditions cannot be met:

- Access/egress
- Sewer/septic requirements, and/or
- Parking requirements

A variance application is a request to Council to be relieved from certain regulations that apply to a zone. A variance application should only be considered if no other options are available as it is nonrefundable, can be time consuming, and approval is not guaranteed.

## I still have questions! Who do I call?

If your property can meet all of the requirements but you still have questions, contact the City's Building Department. Staff are happy to answer any questions you may have.