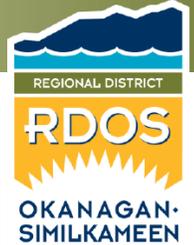


ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT



TO: Electoral Area Services Committee

FROM: J. Zaffino, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: February 5, 2026

RE: “Optimize the Development Approval Process” - Secondary Suite Review (X2025.012-ZONE)

Administrative Recommendation:

THAT the Okanagan Valley Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 2800.59 be initiated.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to seek direction from the Board regarding proposed amendments to the regulation of secondary suites in the Okanagan Valley Zoning Bylaw No. 2800, 2022.

Strategic Priorities: 5.2 Optimize Development Approval Function

Background:

At its meeting of August 21, 2025, the (then) Planning and Development (P&D) Committee of the Board resolved that “the Regional District undertake the following in support of a review of its development approval process as a strategic project in 2025: Residential Zone Review ...”

This direction was in relation to the 2025 Strategic Priorities Work Plan, adopted by the Board at its meeting of March 6, 2025, and the inclusion of project described as; “Optimize Development Approval Process to ensure that the approval function provides the land use policies for responsible and sustainable development to occur required by small communities.”

The “Optimize Development Approval Process” was assigned 400 FTE Hours and was anticipated to commence in 2025.

In order to provide scope for this project, Administration recommended incorporating aspects of the provincial *Development Approvals Process Review* (DAPR) Report and Ministerial guidance related to Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) Implementation.

The objective of both these provincial documents was the creation of a “favourable regulatory environment” and included, amongst other things:

- combine and simplify residential zonings;
- enlarge building envelopes in residential zones in order to reduce the number of DVP applications being processed each year by the Regional District;
- increase density allowances related to secondary suites and accessory dwellings in services areas and rural zones;
- remove of restrictions related to secondary suite floor areas and dwelling widths; and

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- elimination of development permit area designations identified as potentially impeding residential dwelling development.

Analysis:

Administration recognizes that the Board has supported substantial work in recent years to modernize its development approval process and the current project to “Optimize the Development Approval Process” is an opportunity to continue this work.

Further, updating the zoning regulations currently applied to secondary suites may reduce administrative burdens, provide greater flexibility to home owners, increase housing availability and provide support for multi-generational housing.

As there are a number of elements to this Review, each will be discussed separately below:

Secondary Suite Floor Area:

In 2019, the BC Building Code was amended to remove floor area restrictions on secondary suite (e.g. 90 m² or 40% of the habitable space of the building). The intent of this change was to “to remove barriers to the creation of more affordable housing.”

In response, the Regional District amended its zoning bylaws in 2021 to increase the floor area allowance for a secondary suite to 125 m². This was to allow for the inclusion of an additional bedroom in a suite.

At its meeting of March 2, 2023, the Planning and Development (P&D) Committee considered the “Housing Option” of revising the floor area restrictions on secondary suites (e.g. increasing floor area to 150 m² or removing the restriction in its entirety).

In light of the current direction by the province as well as the previous amendments to the Building Code, it is recommended that the floor area of a secondary suite not be restricted.

Conversely, the status quo is available to the Board, as is increasing the maximum floor area to 150 m², or some other number.

Rural Zone Density Regulations & Secondary Suites:

On parcels greater than 1.0 ha in area, the Regional District has *generally* limited density of accessory dwelling units to either one (1) “secondary suite” **or** one (1) “accessory dwelling”.

It is recommended that this density restriction be reconsidered and parcels greater than 1.0 ha in area be permitted one (1) “secondary suite” **and** one (1) “accessory dwelling”. This would generally apply to the SH3, SH4, LH1, LH2, AG1, AG2, AG3 and RA zones.

This approach would also align with provincial direction contained in the SSMUH Policy Manual, specifically:

To mitigate risks related to groundwater contamination, only secondary suites, not accessory dwelling units, should be permitted on properties less than one hectare in size that are not serviced by sewer systems operated by a local government.

It would further be consistent with previous direction provided by the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) that “secondary suites” be permitted on properties less than 1.0 ha in area not serviced by a community sewer system, but that “accessory dwellings” on such parcels be prohibited.

At present, the number of permitted “accessory dwellings” and the allowable floor area varies in the rural zones based on parcel size. NOTE: revising the density of accessory dwellings on larger parcels was also considered as a “Housing Option” by the P&D Committee at its meeting of March 2, 2023.

Conversely, the option of retaining the existing density regulations related to secondary suites is available to the Board.

Duplex Dwelling Units & Secondary Suites:

Prior to the 2019 changes to the BC Building Code, secondary suites could only be built in single detached dwellings. Following these changes, however, secondary suites could be constructed in more types of housing, such as duplexes.

The province advised that this was implemented in order to “to remove barriers to the creation of more affordable housing ... [and to] provide local governments with more options for land use planning.”

In response, it is being proposed that the zoning bylaw be amended to permit a secondary suite in a duplex dwelling unit.

Conversely, the option to continue excluding secondary suites as a permitted for dwelling unit in a duplex is available to the Board.

Summary:

For the reasons outlined above, Administration supports the initiation of an amendment bylaw in order to revise the regulations applied to secondary suites.

Financial Implications:

Financial implications have been considered and none were found.

Communication Strategy:

The proposed bylaw amendment(s) have been notified in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act* as well as the Regional District’s Development Procedures Bylaw No. 2500, 2011.

Alternatives:

1. Status quo.

Will a PowerPoint presentation be presented at the meeting? Yes

Respectfully submitted:



C. Garrish, Senior Manager of Planning

Endorsed By:



A. Fillion, Managing Director, Dev. & Infrastructure