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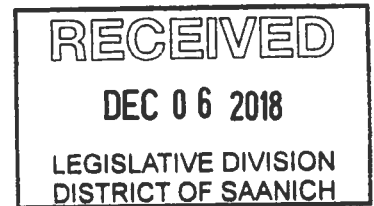
Council Dec 10/18



## The Corporation of the District of Saanich

# Report

**To:** Mayor and Council  
**From:** Sharon Hvozdanski, Director of Planning  
**Date:** November 28, 2018  
**Subject:** Garden Suite Study Update  
**File:** 2140-50



### RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council receive this report for information.
2. That Council allocate \$50,000 from the Council Contingency for Strategic Initiatives to engage a consultant to undertake a financial analysis of draft garden suite regulations and their potential impacts on property values and taxes in Saanich.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

- Summarize the results of the Garden Suite Study process to date;
- Provide an overview of the key elements of the draft regulatory framework that will be presented for public feedback in early 2019; and
- Seek Council direction on undertaking a financial analysis of garden suite regulations and their potential impacts on property values and taxes.

### UPDATE

#### Background

On September 11, 2017 Council approved a Terms of Reference (Attachment A) for a study to explore potential regulatory changes to allow garden suites in single family areas within the Sewer Service Area (the 'study area') of Saanich.

A garden suite – a small detached house that is sited in the rear yard of a single family lot and accessory to the primary dwelling - can offset a mortgage, house a family member, supplement a limited pension, or provide an accessible living situation for persons with mobility issues. Garden suites can add to the housing supply at a time when shortages exist. As a potential housing option they are seen by many communities as a way to add infill in established residential neighbourhoods while still retaining the neighbourhood form and character.

The objectives of the Garden Suite Study, as outlined in the Terms of Reference, are to:

- Investigate garden suites as a form of permanent rental housing;
- Establish a foundation of information to assess potential regulatory changes and associated impacts;
- Develop an understanding of key issues, including challenges and opportunities;

- Assess stakeholder and community support for garden suites;
- Identify locations within the Sewer Service Area where it would be most appropriate to permit garden suites; and
- Create an appropriate regulatory framework for garden suites.

### Summary of Public Engagement

As per Council direction, a public engagement process was initiated in March 2018 to gather feedback on the level of support for garden suites, as well as insight into the public's issues and concerns regarding this type of development.

A variety of communication channels were used to inform residents about the study, including social media (Facebook and Twitter), the Saanich municipal website, e-mail notification and newspaper advertisements and articles. Currently, over 500 people have signed up to receive e-mail notifications about the study.

Major public consultation activities that took place between March and August 2018 are outlined in the table below.

**Table 1 – Summary of Public Engagement**

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY	PARTICIPATION
<b>Three surveys:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Two</b> community surveys</li> <li>• <b>One</b> statistically significant survey</li> </ul>	2,675 completed surveys
<b>Two open houses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gordon Head Recreation Centre – Mar 17, 2018</li> <li>• Saanich Commonwealth Place – Mar 20, 2018</li> </ul>	302 attendees
<b>Five pop-up events:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cedar Hill Recreation Centre – Mar 28, 2018</li> <li>• G.R. Pearkes Recreation Centre – Apr 5, 2018</li> <li>• Beckwith Park Music-in-the-Park – Jul 17, 2018</li> <li>• Brydon Park Music-in-the-Park – Jul 24, 2018</li> <li>• Hyacinth Park Music-in-the-Park – Jul 31, 2018</li> </ul>	204 individual discussions
<b>Three information displays:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saanich Centennial Library – Mar 19-29, 2018</li> <li>• Bruce Hutchison Library – Apr 3-13, 2018</li> <li>• Saanich Talks Speaker's Series – Mar 21 &amp; May 7, 2018</li> </ul>	n/a
Technical workshop with <b>17</b> stakeholders with specific knowledge in the areas of residential construction and design, and real estate – Jun 7, 2018	17 participants
<b>Six presentations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saanich Community Association Network – Mar 7, 2018</li> <li>• Healthy Saanich Advisory Committee – Mar 28, 2018</li> <li>• Planning, Transportation &amp; Economic Development Advisory Committee – Apr 12, 2018</li> <li>• Cascadia Collaborative – Apr 19, 2018</li> <li>• Gordon Head Residents' Association – May 10, 2018</li> <li>• Saanich Heritage Foundation – Oct 10, 2018</li> </ul>	Approximately 93 attendees

### **Summary of Survey Results**

Two community surveys and one randomly selected, statistically-significant survey have been the primary means to gather public input to this point. Community Survey #1 was administered between March and April, 2018 to assess support for garden suites and major regulatory elements. Community Survey #2 was available between June and August, 2018 to ask additional questions about key aspects of regulation, building on issues identified in Survey #1. The research organization, R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. hosted a statistically-significant survey in June 2018 to validate the results from the two community surveys.

Survey results indicated strong support (72% in the statistically-significant survey and 82% in Community Survey #1) for legalizing garden suites in Saanich. The results also provided critical feedback on potential regulatory elements. This information is being used to inform the creation of draft regulations.

A complete summary of survey findings is available in Attachment B of this report. Overall, there is general alignment between both the quantitative and qualitative results of the statistically-significant survey and the community surveys.

### **Issues Identified Through Public Consultation**

In addition to feedback received on the key elements of regulation (e.g. location, size, height), residents have also commented on a variety of topics related to garden suites. Some of the key issues raised include:

- Affordability;
- Impacts on property values and taxes in Saanich;
- Relationship to secondary suites, including illegal suites;
- Accessory buildings being illegally converted to dwelling units;
- Enforcement;
- Rural-zoned properties in the study area;
- Allowance for garden suites on rural properties outside the Sewer Service Area;
- Density on individual lots and in neighbourhoods resulting in neighbourhood impacts such as cars parked on streets and crowding;
- Loss of trees and permeable surfaces; and
- Impacts on future subdivision opportunities.

Staff are exploring these issues in more detail and are looking at different ways that they can be addressed within the regulatory framework. A more complete analysis will be presented to Council when the report on the proposed regulations is brought forward in 2019.

The impacts of garden suites on property values and associated taxes is of particular importance, as this issue has the potential to impact affordability in the long term including for property owners who are not interested in constructing a garden suite. We have limited information on this issue at this time. Therefore, Staff believe that a more thorough investigation of the impacts is warranted to ensure Council has a more complete picture of garden suites and their potential impacts.

### **Elements of the Regulatory Framework**

A number of key elements are being considered for potential regulations as part of the Garden Suite Study. The major regulatory elements are outlined below along with the key questions addressed in the public engagement.

For each element, highlights of public input are shown, including results from the statistically-significant survey. Potential regulations are based on public input and research into the regulations being used in other jurisdictions.

**a. Location**

Key Questions:

- Where in Saanich should garden suites be permitted?
- Where, on individual lots should garden suites be permitted?

Public Input	Potential Regulation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for allowing garden suites in all single family dwelling zones (52%).</li> <li>• Support for allowing garden suites in the rear yard of a lot, with some support to consider garden suites elsewhere on a lot.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow garden suites in rear yards.</li> <li>• Consider variances to allow garden suites in side and front yards, based on lot characteristics.</li> </ul>

The majority of survey respondents supported allowing garden suites in all single family zones, however, some respondents supported allowing garden suites on a case-by-case-basis (e.g. through a rezoning) (36%), or near commercial centres and transportation routes (28%). It is important to note that respondents had the opportunity to select more than one option for locations where they felt garden suites should be permitted.

**b. Height**

Key Questions:

- What should be the maximum height for garden suites?
- Should larger garden suites be allowed on larger lots?

Public Input	Potential Regulation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for single-storey garden suites (42%), one and a half storeys (28%) and two-storeys (17%).</li> <li>• Height should correspond to lot size.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow single-storey garden suites, but include regulations to allow higher garden suites on larger lots.</li> </ul>

Respondents indicated a preference for single-storey garden suites primarily as a way to ensure that garden suites fit into the neighbourhood context and to limit negative impacts on adjacent properties. However, in addition to these comments, respondents also expressed a willingness to allow taller garden suites on larger lots where the impacts of additional height would not impact adjacent properties and parking could be accommodated on site.

### c. Size (Floor Area and Site Coverage)

#### Key Questions:

- What should be the maximum size for garden suites?
- Should larger garden suites be allowed on larger lots?

Public Input	Potential Regulation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for garden suites of different sizes 400-600 ft<sup>2</sup> (25%), 600-800 ft<sup>2</sup> (38%), and 800-1000 ft<sup>2</sup> (19%).</li> <li>• Size of the garden suite should correspond to lot size.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow a range of garden suites sizes that scale up based on lot size.</li> </ul>

The highest number of respondents supported garden suites between 600 and 800 ft<sup>2</sup>. Respondents also indicated a willingness to allow larger garden suites on larger lots, as long as neighbourhood impacts are addressed and parking is accommodated on-site.

A primary concern expressed about allowing larger garden suites was the loss of trees and permeable surfaces, which could change the character of neighbourhoods. With more hard surfaces on lots, residents are concerned that there will be added pressure on municipal infrastructure to handle rainwater.

### d. Parking

#### Key Question:

- Should an additional parking space be required on site?

Public Input	Potential Regulation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong support for an additional parking space on site (77%).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent with regulations for secondary suites, require one parking stall on site for tenants of the garden suite.</li> </ul>

Parking was a significant concern for respondents. They expressed concerns about too many cars being parked on residential streets and issues with safety and crowding. Respondents discussed concerns about the number of secondary suites and a perceived lack of enforcement on illegal suites and parking.

### e. Owner Occupation and Vacation Rentals

#### Key Questions:

- Should the property owner live on the property – either in the garden suite or single family house?
- Should garden suites be used as vacation rentals?

Public Input	Potential Regulation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for property owners with garden suites to live on site (72%).</li> <li>• Residents are not supportive of garden suites being used as vacation rentals (61% not supportive).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require owners to live on site, consistent with secondary suites regulation.</li> <li>• Prohibit the use of garden suites as vacation rentals.</li> </ul>

Survey respondents indicated a strong desire to not allow garden suites to be used as vacation rentals. They are supportive of garden suites as a way to add to the supply of rental housing in Saanich, but they believe that vacation rentals will only undermine this objective.

#### f. Design Guidelines

The results of the statistically significant survey indicate that the majority of respondents (75%) support the use of design guidelines to address elements of building and site design. Comments received from residents tended to focus on concerns about shading, loss of privacy, liveability, site design, and trees and landscaping.

Potential criteria and objectives that could be incorporated into design guidelines are summarized below:

Design Criteria	Potential Design Objective
<b>Location on the lot</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To minimize disruption to the character and appearance of existing neighbourhoods. Garden suites should be sensitive to lot context, natural features and the existing development, both on the property and on the adjacent property.</li> </ul>
<b>Building design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To consider elements of the building design such as windows, entrances (orientation to the street), scale and massing, addressing, location of mechanical equipment, accessibility, projections and lighting to ensure that garden suites fit on the property and are sensitive to neighbouring dwellings and properties.</li> </ul>
<b>Roof form</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage compact building design through consideration of roof height and shape, and to consider privacy when making decisions about windows in the roof form.</li> <li>To consider the impacts of roof design on trees.</li> </ul>
<b>Decks, porches, balconies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To consider privacy concerns as they relate to the location and size of decks, porches, and balconies.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure that garden suites foster water conservation and rainwater management, as well as efficient use of energy through building and site design considerations.</li> <li>To encourage reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.</li> </ul>
<b>Outdoor amenity space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote liveability through a variety of means including the provision of useable and private outdoor space for garden suite tenants and owners.</li> </ul>
<b>Trees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To work in coordination with the Tree Protection Bylaw and the Urban Forest Strategy to minimize the loss of trees through pre-planning and protection of tree roots during construction.</li> <li>To identify potential replanting sites to mitigate tree loss.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscaping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To preserve neighbourhood character, while at the same time maximizing privacy, conserving green space, and enhancing permeability.</li> </ul>

<b>Parking &amp; access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce crowding and conflict on neighbourhood streets.</li> <li>• To consider rainwater management in driveway design.</li> <li>• To ensure parking is functional and easy to access at any time.</li> </ul>
<b>Waste &amp; recycling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure waste and recycling facilities are provided for garden suites.</li> </ul>
<b>Heritage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that garden suites contribute to the long-term conservation of heritage resources in Saanich.</li> </ul>

### **g. Review Process**

A key element of the regulatory framework is identifying the steps required to obtain approval for a new garden suite. The BC Building Code, which addresses health and safety issues, forms part of the regulatory review.

Ultimately, the process that Saanich uses will influence the time and steps required to gain approval. It will also dictate how community concerns are heard.

The majority of survey respondents (52%) support allowing neighbour input on garden suite applications. At the same time, the majority (58%) also supports a fast approval process. A thorough review of other jurisdictions' processes suggests that there are a variety of options available for structuring review processes.

An analysis of options and a recommendation for a review process in Saanich will be brought to Council in 2019 as part of the proposed regulatory framework.

### **h. Accessory Building Regulations**

Analysis of issues associated with the potential legalization of garden suites has highlighted the need to review current regulations for accessory buildings. One issue is how accessory buildings will work in conjunction with garden suites on any given property. Another issue relates to how accessory building regulations can be adapted to ensure the pathway to construct a legal garden suite is preferable to the pathway to construct and illegally occupy an accessory building not intended for residential use. Recommendations for amendments to accessory building regulations will be brought for Council's consideration as part of proposed garden suite regulations.

## **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

The potential regulatory framework highlighted in this report responds to the priorities, ideas and concerns expressed through public consultation. It also reflects research findings and staff's investigation of the potential impacts of garden suite regulations on single family residential properties in the study area.

The scope of work to be completed for the Garden Suite Study, as outlined in the approved Terms of Reference includes identification of potential impacts to property values and taxes as a key component. Staff have completed preliminary research to examine property value impacts

when similar regulations have been implemented in other communities. This initial research has not been sufficient to provide a clear sense of the magnitude of potential financial impacts in the Saanich context. Additionally, some stakeholders have identified potential tax impacts as a key area of concern. Therefore, staff recommend that a consultant with economic expertise be engaged to better assess and quantify the potential impacts of regulatory changes on property values and property taxes.

The recommended analysis would allow for a thorough investigation of the implications of the potential regulatory framework on property owners, including those who choose to build a garden suite, and those who do not.

The analysis would involve the collection and evaluation of market data and case study analysis of representative sites in Saanich based on draft regulations. It would examine positive and negative impacts on property values and provide an estimate of impacts to lot value due to a garden suite. From this analysis, it would be possible to estimate the impact on property taxes of both:

1. A homeowner with a garden suite; and
2. A homeowner who does not want a garden suite but may be negatively impacted by an increase in property taxes as a result of garden suites being constructed in the immediate neighbourhood resulting in an increase in assessed property values.

Additionally, a review of other jurisdictions would also highlight evidence of positive or negative impacts of regulatory changes on property values.

It is anticipated that this analysis would enable staff and Council to make more informed decisions about the draft regulations, including how to proceed with regulations in light of potential impacts on property owners. It would also allow the public to make a more informed decision about their level of support for garden suite regulations.

Staff is seeking Council direction on whether to engage a consultant to undertake this financial analysis. Additional funding in the amount of \$50,000 would be required to complete the work. The remaining project budget would provide some of the necessary funding. Council direction is required to access additional money from the Council Contingency for Strategic Initiatives fund to cover the outstanding amount.

The time required to complete the analysis would be approximately 10 weeks.

## **CONCLUSION**


On September 11, 2017 Council approved a Terms of Reference for a study to explore potential regulatory changes to allow garden suites in Saanich. As per Council's direction, staff have undertaken a comprehensive public consultation process in an effort to fully gauge community support for garden suites and investigate key aspects of the regulations in more detail. Based on the engagement results and research, staff have been preparing a draft regulatory framework that will be presented to the public for feedback in 2019.


Through the public consultation, a number of issues have been raised by community members, including concerns about affordability for Saanich residents in the long-term. At this time, there is limited information on the potential impacts of regulatory changes to property values and taxes. Therefore, Staff is seeking Council direction to engage a consultant to prepare a financial




analysis. The required budget for this work is \$50,000 and it will take approximately 10 weeks to complete.

Staff believe that a more thorough investigation of the financial impacts is warranted to assist Council in making an informed decision about the draft regulations and garden suites in general.

Prepared by:   
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**Attachments**

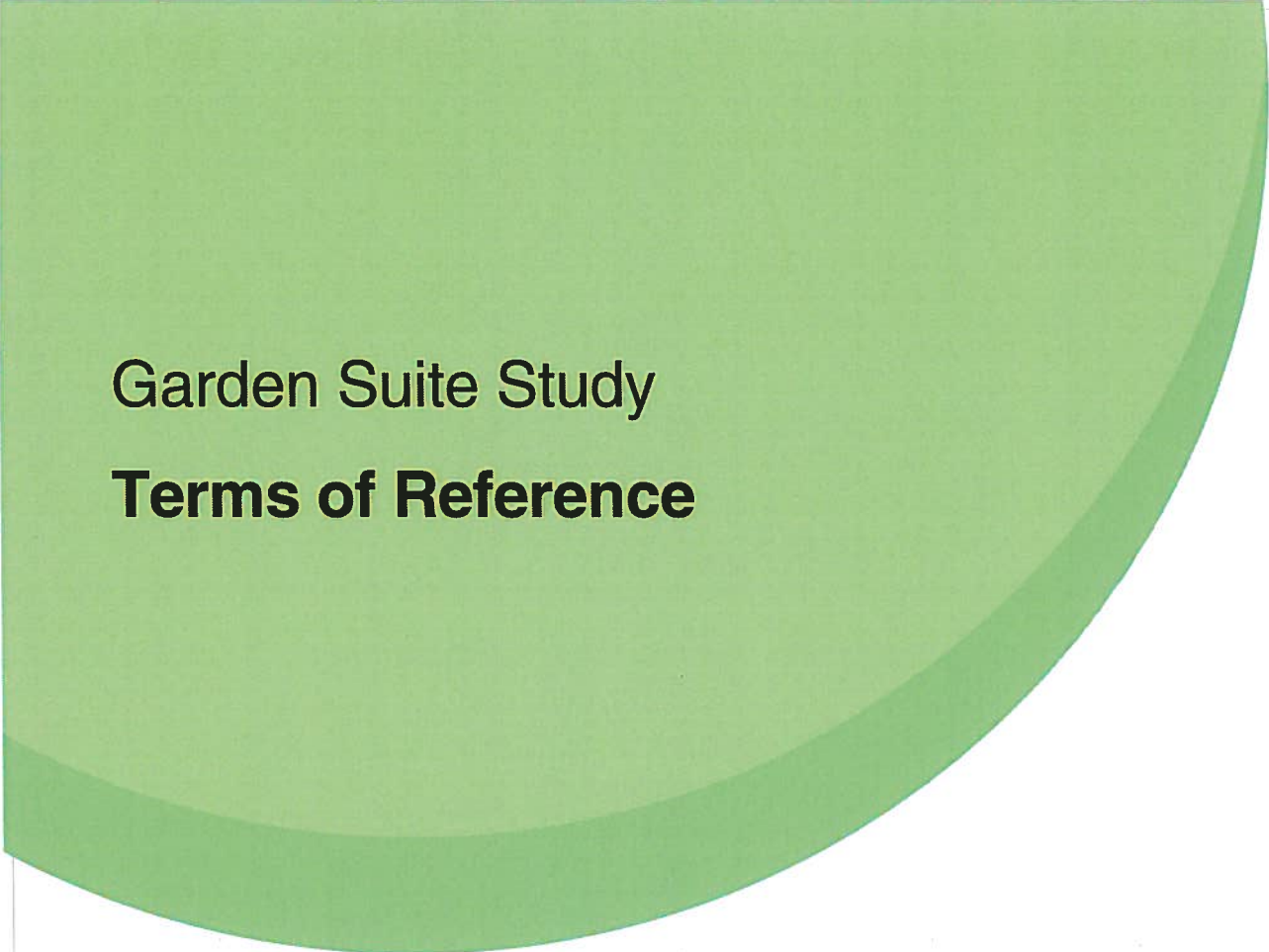
- Attachment A: Garden Suite Study Terms of Reference
- Attachment B: Phase 2 – Summary of Public Engagement and Survey Results
- Attachment C: Report to Council – August 10, 2017

cc: Shari Holmes-Saltzman, Manager of Current Planning  
Graham Barbour, Manager of Inspection Services

**ADMINISTRATOR’S COMMENTS:**

I endorse the recommendation from the Director of Planning.

  
Paul Thorkelsson, Administrator



Garden Suite Study  
**Terms of Reference**

**ADOPTED BY COUNCIL**

September 11, 2017



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## **1. OVERVIEW**

Having a garden suite to help offset a mortgage, house a family member, or provide an accessible living situation is becoming increasingly appealing to homeowners. Garden suites can add to the housing supply at a time when shortages exist. They are a potential housing option and used by many communities as a way to infill established residential neighbourhoods while retaining form and character.

Currently, garden suites are not permitted within the District of Saanich. However, there is direction in the District of Saanich's Official Community Plan (OCP) Policy 5.1.2.10 to consider "a wide range of alternative housing types" in support of affordable housing. The Official Community Plan also supports increasing density within urban centres and villages to build walkable and sustainable communities, and specifies support for detached "carriage/coach houses" up to two storeys.

Relevant policy also exists in the Official Community Plan to support housing choice, appropriate infill, and housing affordability. The Official Community Plan envisions a broad range of housing types that can accommodate people of different ages, incomes, family structures, and physical and social needs. It supports housing options to allow residents to age in place, accommodate new residents, and provide lifestyle choices.

In addition to choice, housing affordability is an issue of municipal and regional importance. The District of Saanich's housing policy resides in the Official Community Plan and aligns with the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy. Key regional goals include regulatory actions to implement best practices to permit greater densification and inclusionary zoning. Examples of this include allowing secondary suites, planning for increased density in "Centres" and "Villages", and encouraging infill.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

On August 22, 2016, Council passed a motion directing staff to explore strategies to regulate garden suites in Saanich for Council's consideration.

Secondary suites have been legal within urban Saanich since 2014 by building permit. The application process includes requirements regarding location, size, owner occupancy, parking, as well as meeting BC Building Code, zoning and plumbing bylaws, and other applicable requirements. The zoning requirements specify that the suite must be contained within the single family dwelling, and allows for only one secondary suite per lot.

Public interest in garden suites exists, although historically support has been lower than for secondary suites. During the public engagement process for secondary suites, residents were surveyed regarding their level of support for garden suites located in an accessory building such as a converted garage or purpose-built cottage. Survey results indicated that in 2009, there was 47% in favour of garden suites, 20% neutral, and 33% against. In 2014, support for garden suites increased to 52%, 22% neutral, with 26% against. The large number of neutral responses suggests that the public needs more details to determine their support for this issue.

There is considerable experience in other BC communities with garden suites from which Saanich can benefit. Within the region, Colwood, Victoria, Sidney, and Metchosin have adopted regulations that regulate their use. Nanaimo has had regulations in place since 2008. In the Lower Mainland, communities including

Vancouver, West Vancouver, Coquitlam, City of North Vancouver, and the District of North Vancouver support detached accessory residential. Kelowna has allowed them since 1998.

There are a variety of approaches and approval processes for regulating garden suites within these communities depending on local context. These examples provide the District of Saanich with ample experience from which to draw to develop its own approach.

### 3. PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of undertaking a study to examine legalizing garden suites is to:

- Increase the long-term supply of rental housing;
- Expand the diversity of housing choice in Saanich;
- Provide a legal and safe route for a form of housing which is now occurring illegally; and,
- Support forms of infill that are sensitive to established neighbourhoods within urban parts of Saanich.

### 4. DEFINITION

The terminology for garden suites varies almost as much as the number of communities which have adopted them. Some other terms in use include: backyard cottages, laneway houses, carriage houses, coach houses, accessory dwelling units, and detached accessory dwelling units.

Garden suites are defined as small detached homes (see Figure 1) that are sited in the rear yard of single family lots where an accessory building might go (see Figure 2), and are accessory to the primary dwelling.



Figure 1: Garden suite

Garden suites are for rental purposes. Subdivision and strata titling are not permitted.

The BC Building Code considers garden suites to be small homes. They must meet the same standard of construction and servicing requirements as principal residential buildings. They tend to cost the same or slightly more per square foot to build than standard homes.

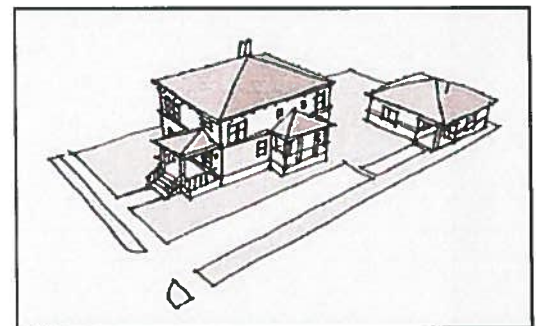


Figure 2: Siting of garden suite

### 5. STUDY OBJECTIVES

- a) Investigate garden suites as a form of permanent rental housing.
- b) Develop a sound information base to assess potential regulatory changes and associated impacts.
- c) Develop an understanding of key challenges and opportunities.
- d) Assess community and stakeholder support for garden suites.
- e) Identify locations within the Sewer Servicing Area where it would be most appropriate to permit garden suites.
- f) Provide direction on an appropriate potential regulatory framework for garden suites.

## 6. SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of work is to develop proposed standards for detached garden suites as an alternative to secondary suites (one or the other, but not both) on single family lots. The study will produce a technical analysis of design and land use requirements, a community engagement process to determine concerns, interests, and level of support, and a regulatory regime and approvals process.

The focus of the study is to provide the opportunity for permanent long-term rental housing stock, built to BC Building Code standards. Temporary structures that do not meet the BC Building Code standards and seasonal recreational vehicles are outside the scope of this work. Smaller sized homes are within the scope of the study, as long as they meet the BC Building Code.

The geographic scope of the study includes the area within the Sewer Service Area only.

Informed by the experience of other communities, the scope of work includes the following elements:

- A brief analysis of housing supply and gaps, social and demographic changes/needs, and potential impact of garden suites on Saanich's housing inventory;
- A review of regulatory frameworks in other jurisdictions;
- A review of the District of Saanich's existing accessory building regulations;
- A determination of appropriate building dimensions, lot/siting requirements, parking standards, etc. for garden suites in Saanich;
- An identification of appropriate zones, locations, and/or lots for garden suites;
- An estimated cost of construction;
- A public engagement process to determine community concerns, interests, and support;
- Proposed regulatory options, a regulatory framework, and approvals process;
- An analysis of anticipated housing impacts if regulations are implemented;
- Identification of potential impacts to property assessment and property taxes;
- An assessment of current bylaws, policies, and processes to ensure consistency and alignment; and
- A proposed timeline for implementation.

Other issues requiring consideration will be:

- Servicing requirements and capacity;
- Enforcement considerations;
- Legal standing of existing garden suites;
- Minimizing neighbourhood impacts through:
  - Off-street parking;
  - Density limits;
  - Owner occupation;
  - Orientation and privacy; and,
  - Location of entry; and
- Registration or licensing; and
- Feasibility of implementation.

## 7. PLANNING PROCESS

There are three activities that make up the planning process to examine the potential for regulating garden suites (see Table 1). A background technical report will provide sound information and analysis that can

serve as a basis for detailed discussions. The public engagement exercises will provide an opportunity to share research findings, explore issues, and gauge public support for regulatory changes. These activities will provide the basis for drafting regulations within the Saanich context.

**Table 1: Planning Process**

PHASE	ACTIVITIES	KEY DELIVERABLES	DURATION
Technical report	Overview of housing profile SCAN and key stakeholder interviews Technical analysis of development standards and zoning of existing accessory buildings and proposed garden suites Building cost estimates Analysis of regulations and approvals processes in other jurisdictions Identification of key issues	Housing gap brief Technical report of development standards, zoning, property eligibility, potential regulatory approaches Info package for public Display boards for public engagement	3 months
Public Engagement	Community survey Consult stakeholders and the public on support and concern for garden suites Test approaches to regulating garden suites with stakeholders and the public Loop-back to stakeholder groups to get feedback on draft development standards	Summary of public engagement process and outcomes  Options for garden suite regulatory approach	6 months
<b>COUNCIL CHECK IN</b>			
Draft regulations	Develop a recommended regulatory regime including, if applicable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recommended approvals process</li> <li>▪ Draft bylaw amendments</li> <li>▪ Draft design guidelines</li> </ul>	Recommended regulatory regime Proposed Zoning Bylaw amendment Proposed DPA guidelines Communications materials	3 months

## 8. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A series of open houses, workshops, focus groups and stakeholder meetings are planned to fully explore the issue with key stakeholders.

Key stakeholders include:

- General public and residents;
- Homeowners and neighbours of single family lots;
- Builders and designers;
- Professional associations such as Landlord BC, Urban Development Institute, and Canadian Home Builders Association;
- BC Assessment;
- CRD and other municipalities;
- Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria;
- Saanich Community Associations and Network (SCAN);
- District of Saanich staff; and,
- Committees of Council.

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) illustrates a spectrum of public participation in planning processes. Table 2 identifies examples of the level of public engagement that is proposed for the review of a regulatory approach to garden suites.

**Table 2: Proposed Engagement Activities - IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation**

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
<b>Public Participation Goal</b>	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decision	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution
<b>Anticipated Use of Technique</b>	Saanich website and social media  Advertising  Background information	Open Houses  Primary research including interviews and community survey	Workshops  Stakeholder meetings  Focus Groups	



## **9. BUDGET AND TIMING**

The project will be led by the District of Saanich staff, with support from consultants as needed throughout the process. The planning process will require planning and technical staff, with some support from other departments.

The budget for the Garden Suite Study is \$45,000. Included in the budget are project costs for a detailed technical analysis and community survey. The District of Saanich will retain an external research firm to undertake a random survey of Saanich residents of adequate sample size to be statistically significant. The budget also includes expenses for print production, advertising, facility rentals, open house refreshments, supplies, and graphic design and illustration work.

The project is expected to be completed within twelve months.

## **10. DELIVERABLES**

The final deliverables of this project will be a report to Council with attachments that are anticipated to include the following:

- Technical report on garden suites;
- Summary of public engagement process and outcomes;
- Recommended actions with regards to regulating garden suites;
- Draft Zoning Bylaw Amendments;
- Design guidelines; and
- Proposed garden suite approval process.

# Garden Suite Study



## Phase 2 Summary of Public Engagement & Survey Results

March—August 2018

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### Links

[Community Survey #1 and Open House Results](#)

[Community Survey #2 Results](#)

[Public Opinion Survey for Garden Suites Results](#)



## Executive Summary

### What we heard

The results of the three surveys indicate the following:

- Strong support for legalizing garden suites in single family neighbourhoods in Saanich.
- Support for allowing larger garden suites on larger lots.
- Strong support for parking on the property for garden suites.
- A strong desire to ensure garden suite regulations are enforced.
- Strong support for design guidelines.
- Support for neighbour input on garden suite applications.
- Support for a fast approval process.
- Strong support for an owner living on the property.
- A low level of support for garden suites to be used as short-term vacation rentals.

### Purpose of this report

This report provides an overview of the public engagement activities that took place between March and August, 2018. It also summarizes the survey results from the three surveys that were conducted during this period.

### Next Steps

The survey results outlined in this report will help to inform the draft regulations for garden suites in Saanich. The draft regulatory framework will be available for public review and comment in the fall.

## 1. Background

The District of Saanich is exploring potential regulatory changes to allow garden suites in single family areas in the Sewer Service Area (the 'study area'). A public engagement process was initiated in March 2018 to gather feedback on the level of support for garden suites, as well as insight into the public's issues and concerns regarding this type of development.

Community Survey #1 was administered between March and April with the purpose of gathering input from the public about garden suites and potential regulations. Between June and August, the District hosted a second community survey (Community Survey #2) to ask additional and more detailed questions about aspects of the potential regulations. The results from this survey, as well as the results from the Community Survey #1 were validated in a statistically-significant survey that was conducted by R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd, on behalf of the District in June.

This report summarizes the public engagement activities that took place between March and August, as well as the survey results from the three surveys.

### A Summary of Public Engagement Activities

Various communication channels were used to inform residents about public engagement opportunities, including social media (Facebook and Twitter), the Saanich website, email notification and the newspaper. In addition to these tools, residents who were randomly selected to participate in the statistically-significant survey received a letter in the mail inviting them to participate online, or by telephone.

A series of public engagement activities were launched between March and August. They included:

Two open houses were held at:

- ◆ Gordon Head Recreation Centre—Saturday, March 17, 2018, 2:00-5:00 pm
- ◆ Saanich Commonwealth Place—Tuesday, March 20, 2018, 4:00-7:00 pm

Participants were encouraged to provide their feedback by completing a survey and/or adding comments on sticky notes to presentation boards.

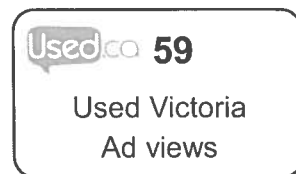
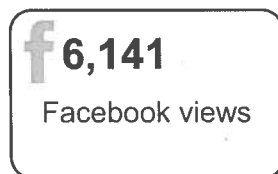
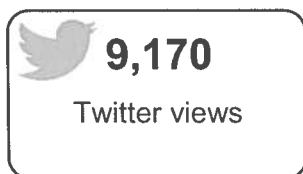
- Two pop-up events were held at:
  - ◆ Cedar Hill Recreation Centre—Wednesday, March 28, 2018, 9:00 am—12:00 pm
  - ◆ G.R. Pearkes Recreation Centre—Thursday, April 5, 2018, 9:00 am-12:00 pm
- Information displays were installed at:
  - ◆ Saanich Centennial Library—March 19-29, 2018
  - ◆ Bruce Hutchinson Library—April 3-13, 2018
  - ◆ Saanich Talks Speaker's Series—March 21 & May 7, 2018

- A technical workshop that engaged 17 stakeholders with specific knowledge in the areas of residential construction and design, and real estate in a focused discussion about aspects of potential regulations for garden suites was held on June 7.
- Three pop-up events were held at:
  - ◆ Beckwith Park Music-in-the-Park – July 17, 2018
  - ◆ Brydon Park Music-in-the-Park – July 24, 2018
  - ◆ Hyacinth Park Music-in-the-Park – July 31, 2018
- Presentations were given to the following stakeholder groups. The purpose of these presentations was to provide an overview of the study and seek feedback on potential regulations.
  - ◆ Saanich Community Association Network—March 7, 2018
  - ◆ Healthy Saanich Advisory Committee—March 28, 2018
  - ◆ Planning, Transportation & Economic Development Advisory Committee—April 12, 2018
  - ◆ Cascadia Collaborative—April 19, 2018
  - ◆ Gordon Head Residents' Association—May 10, 2018

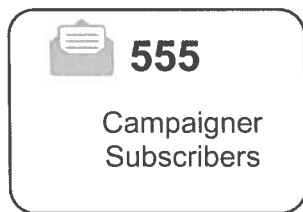
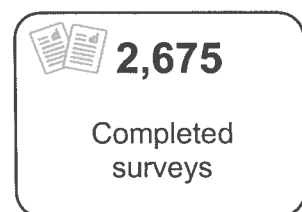
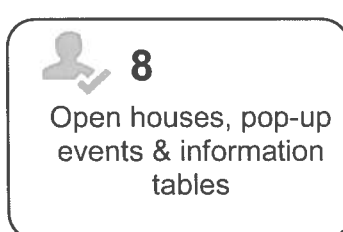
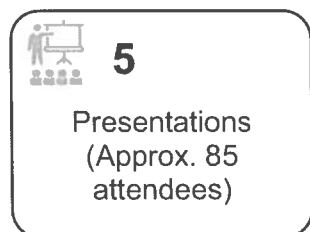
## 2. Engagement Snapshot

The following is a snapshot of the engagement activities between March to August.

### Website & media exposure



### Public participation activities



## 3. Summary of Survey Results

The quantitative results from the three surveys are summarized in the tables below. In total, 1,789 community surveys and 886 statistically-significant surveys were completed. Full results for all of the surveys are available online in:

- *Community Survey #1 and Open Houses Results*
- *Community Survey #2 Results*
- *Public Opinion Survey for Garden Suites in Saanich Results*

### Support for legalization of garden suites

	Very supportive / Supportive	Neutral	Not Supportive / Not supportive at all
Community Survey #1	81.9%	3.0%	15.0%
Statistically-Significant Survey	72.4%	9.2%	18.5%

### Location of garden suites

	In all single family dwelling (RS) zones	On a case-by-case basis	Near commercial centres and major transportation routes	Nowhere	Other
Community Survey #1	62.9%	25.5%	11.5%	8.1%	n/a
Statistically-Significant Survey	52.4%	35.5%	28.3%	10.3%	7.6%

### Size of garden suites

	400-600 sq. ft. (bachelor – 1 bdrm)	600-800 sq. ft. (1-2 bdrms)	800-1000 sq. ft. (2-3 bdrm)	Other*	Don't support garden suites
Community Survey #2	23.0%	36.2%	28.3%	5.6%	6.9%
Statistically-Significant Survey	24.6%	37.8%	18.5%	6.0%	13.1%

\*Respondents that responded "other" were asked to specify a maximum size that they would support for garden suites. Their comments are summarized below.

- Support for garden suites with floor areas that are:
  - ◆ 400 square feet or less



# Garden Suite Study

- ◆ 400-500 square feet only. The size should remain small to ensure that the garden suite does not become a second (full-sized) dwelling.
- ◆ 1000 square feet or more. Some respondents indicated that a garden suite could be more than 1000 square feet if it was on a larger and/or rural lot.
- The height of the garden suite should correspond to the height of the principal dwelling.

## Larger garden suites on larger lots

	Very supportive / Supportive	Neutral	Not Supportive / Not supportive at all
Community Survey #2	75.2%	7.68%	17.9%
Statistically-Significant Survey	58.5%	14.4%	27.0%

## Maximum height

	One storey	One and a half storeys	Two storeys	Don't support garden suites
Community Survey #2	33.4%	28.8%	30.8%	6.9%
Statistically-Significant Survey	42.0%	27.7%	17.2%	13.1%

## One additional parking space on the property

	Very supportive / Supportive	Neutral	Not Supportive / Not supportive at all
Statistically-Significant Survey	77.0%	13.0%	10.0%

## Enforcement of regulations for garden suites

	Very important / Important	Neutral	Low Importance/ Not important at all
Community Survey #2	72.8%	17.6%	9.5%
Statistically-Significant Survey	78.8%	13.8%	7.5%

## Support for design guidelines

	Very supportive / Supportive	Neutral	Not Supportive / Not supportive at all
Community Survey #1	66.1%	16.6%	17.3%
Statistically-Significant Survey	74.6%	13.5%	11.9%



## Neighbour input on individual garden suite applications

	Very important / Important	Neutral	Low Importance/ Not important at all
Community Survey #2	43.3%	17.5%	39.3%
Statistically-Significant Survey	51.6%	21.8%	26.5%

## Fast approval process

	Very important / Important	Neutral	Low Importance/ Not important at all
Community Survey #2	71.9%	12.2%	15.8%
Statistically-Significant Survey	57.5%	22.7%	19.8%

## Owner occupation

	Very important / Important	Neutral	Low Importance/ Not important at all
Community Survey #1	66.3%	10.8%	22.9%
Statistically-Significant Survey	71.9%	9.3%	18.8%

## Vacation rentals

	Very supportive / Supportive	Neutral	Not Supportive / Not supportive at all
Community Survey #1	44.0%	12.3%	43.8%
Statistically-Significant Survey	27.5%	11.7%	60.8%

## Qualitative Comments

Themes that emerged from the written comments largely mirrored the quantitative survey results outlined above, but provided additional contextual information to further explain residents' opinions. Some additional themes, related to the study area and more specific aspects of the regulation were also recorded. A summary of the qualitative themes is outlined below:

- There is general support for legalization of garden suites. Reasons for legalization include:
  - ◆ Mortgage help for owners

- ◆ Additional supply of rental housing and more housing choice
- ◆ Housing options for family members
- ◆ Potential for additional density in existing neighbourhoods.
- A strong desire to see regulations for garden suites enforced to minimize neighbourhood impacts.
- A strong desire to see parking on the property for garden suites.
- A desire not to see garden suites used as short-term vacation rentals.
- A desire to see:
  - ◆ Garden suites as a housing option in rural Saanich.
  - ◆ Garden suites fit with the existing character of the neighbourhood.
  - ◆ Quick approval of the regulations for garden suites so that owners can move ahead with their development plans.
  - ◆ Consideration of potential neighbourhood impacts when deciding what the regulations will be for building size and height. Impacts may include overlook (loss of privacy), noise, shading, and light spill.
- The size of the garden suite should correspond to the size of the lot. A larger lot can accommodate a larger suite. The size should also correspond to the size of the main dwelling.
- Enforcement is necessary to address neighbourhood impacts such as crowded streets, parking conflict, and noise. Regulations should be clear and easy to enforce.
- General support for legalization of garden suites. Those residents who are not supportive of garden suites are concerned about issues such as increased property values and enforcement.

### Survey Demographics

A breakdown of survey respondents by age and housing tenure are outlined in the table below.

Age	Community Survey #1 (n=1,078)	Community Survey #2 (n=711)	Statistically-Significant Survey (n=886)
18-30	5.8% (58)	6.1% (44)	3.0% (27)
31-49	39.6% (398)	38.0% (265)	21.0% (186)
50-64	33.6% (338)	32.7% (228)	36.6% (324)
65 years or older	17.9% (180)	18.7% (130)	29.4% (349)
Housing Tenure			
Owner	78.3% (791)	81.2% (565)	87.2% (773)
Renter/Tenant	12.4% (125)	9.2% (64)	3.6% (32)
Owner/Landlord	9.3% (94)	9.6% (67)	6.5% (58)

## 4. Next Steps

The survey results outlined in this report will help to inform the draft regulations for garden suites in Saanich. The draft regulatory framework will be available for public review and comment in the fall.



The Corporation of the District of Saanich

# Report

**To:** Mayor and Council  
**From:** Sharon Hvozdanski, Director of Planning  
**Date:** August 10, 2017  
**Subject:** Garden Suite Study – Terms of Reference  
**File:** 2140-50

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## RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council endorse the attached Garden Suite Study Terms of Reference.
2. That Council allocate \$45,000 from the Council Contingency for Strategic Initiatives towards this study.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide Council with a general overview of the subject matter;
- Seek Council's endorsement of the Terms of Reference for a study examining the potential legalization of garden suites inside the Urban Containment Boundary;
- Seek Council direction on if, how, and when they wish to finance the Garden Suite Study.

## DISCUSSION

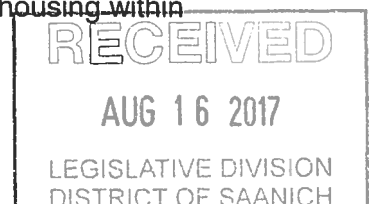
### Background

On August 22, 2016, Council passed a motion directing staff to develop strategies to explore regulation of garden suites in the District of Saanich, reading:

"That Council request staff to build upon the existing survey from 2014 and move forward on developing strategies for Council to consider on options for garden suites in Saanich."

Garden suites, also known as granny flats or carriage houses, are detached dwelling units that are sited within the rear yard of a property with a single family home as its primary use and provide rental accommodation. They are small houses built to the same Building Code and servicing standards as typical homes.

Garden suites tend to cost about the same, or slightly more, per square foot to construct as typical homes, and as a result are at the higher end of the housing affordability spectrum. They do, however, expand housing choice, offer potential for ground-oriented family housing within



established neighbourhoods, and provide other social benefits such as the opportunity to age-in-place.

Garden suites are currently not permitted in the District of Saanich. While the Zoning Bylaw permits accessory buildings on single family lots, residential occupancy of these buildings is not permitted. Illegal garden suites in Saanich currently exist and are subject to the District of Saanich's bylaw enforcement policy.

Secondary suites are rental units that are located within the principal residential building on a single family lot. They were legalized in the District of Saanich in a graduated way. Since 2014, secondary suites have been allowed by building permit on the majority of single family lots within the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB).

The District of Saanich's Official Community Plan (OCP), the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), and the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (RHAS) all support opportunities to expand infill housing options in urban areas.

An indication of community support for garden suites came from a survey administered during the planning process for legalizing secondary suites. In 2009 and 2014, the District of Saanich Planning department conducted statistically-significant surveys to assess the level of community support for secondary suites, including detached garden suites, and various regulatory elements. Between 2009 and 2014, the support for "legalization of suites within an accessory building" grew from 47% to 52% (see Table 1). The relatively large amount of "neutral support" suggests respondents may need more information, such as technical and regulatory details, to understand and decide if they support this option.

**Table 1: Community Support for Legalization of Suites within an Accessory Building**

**Question: How supportive are you of allowing secondary suites to be located in an accessory building (e.g. converted garage or purpose built cottage) on a single-family lot?**

<b>SURVEY</b>	<b>Supportive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Not Supportive</b>
2014 Suites Study North of McKenzie	51.8%	21.9%	26.3%
2009 Suites Study South of McKenzie	47.0%	20.3%	32.7%

The legalization of garden suites has been occurring in a number of BC municipalities in the past five to ten years. Preliminary research undertaken for this Terms of Reference has shown a number of municipalities in BC have undertaken processes to study, implement, monitor, and revise regulations for garden suites. There is experience from communities of different sizes, urban/suburban/rural make-up, and of varying growth rates. This information can provide useful lessons to the District of Saanich.

### **Study Terms of Reference**

A Terms of Reference has been developed to examine potential legalization of garden suites in the District of Saanich and is included as Attachment A. The purpose of the study is to examine garden suites as a way to sensitively increase the long-term supply of rental housing in established residential neighbourhoods, and expand housing diversity.

The study objectives are:

- To investigate garden suites as a form of permanent rental housing;
- To develop a sound information base to assess potential regulatory changes and associated impacts;
- To develop an understanding of key challenges and opportunities;
- To assess community and stakeholder support for garden suites;
- To identify suitable locations for garden suites; and
- To provide direction on an appropriate regulatory framework.

The proposed planning process is scheduled to take up to 12 months, and would commence upon approval of the Terms of Reference by Council. The project would be undertaken in three phases:

1. Technical report – the study requires a technical report to provide background information and technical analysis that would serve as a basis for detailed discussions;
2. Public Engagement process – identifying community concerns, interests, and support; and
3. Draft regulations – proposed bylaw amendments, design guidelines, and an approvals process make up the regulatory framework for implementing legalized garden suites.

The public engagement phase is the largest allocation of time within the project plan and is proposed to take six months. Interested community members will have an opportunity to review technical information and highlight issues and interests. A loop-back process will be built in to allow for public review of potential regulatory and approvals approaches prior to going to Council.

#### Scope of Work

The scope of work is to develop proposed standards for detached garden suites as an alternative to secondary suites (one or the other, but not both) on single family lots. The study will produce a technical analysis of design and land use considerations, a community engagement process to determine concerns, interests and level of support, and a regulatory regime and approvals process.

The Terms of Reference defines the focus of the study as providing the opportunity for permanent long-term rental housing stock, built to BC Building Code standards. Temporary structures that do not meet the BC Building Code standards and seasonal recreational vehicles are outside the scope of this work.

The geographic scope of the study includes the area within the Urban Containment Boundary only. This is supported by Official Community Plan and Regional Growth Strategy policy (for rationale, see Policy Analysis section of this report, “Growth within the Urban Containment Boundary”), and is consistent with the Secondary Suites regulations.

Within the defined geographic area, the Terms of Reference’s project scope includes an examination of the following elements:

- Regulatory frameworks in other jurisdictions;
- Appropriate building dimensions, lot/siting requirements, parking standards;
- Estimated cost of construction;
- Appropriate zones, locations, and/or lots for garden suites;

- Regulatory options and a regulatory framework and approvals process;
- Housing impacts if regulations are implemented;
- Consistency with current bylaws, policies, and processes;
- Servicing requirements and capacity;
- Enforcement considerations;
- Legal standing of existing garden suites;
- Potential impacts to property assessment and property taxes;
- Minimizing neighbourhood impacts through:
  - Off-street parking;
  - Density limits;
  - Owner occupation;
  - Orientation and privacy; and,
  - Location of entry; and
- Implementation strategies including registration and/or licensing.

Level of Public Participation

According to the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, the design of the community consultation program depends on the desired goal for public participation. In this project, the highest goal on the spectrum is to *involve* the public: to work with the public throughout the process in order to understand community concerns and aspirations.

A full engagement program is recommended in the Terms of Reference in order to enable the Project Team to understand and respond to community feedback.

**Table 2: Public Engagement Goals**

Phase	Level of Public Participation	Engagement Techniques
Technical Report	Consult	Interviews with key stakeholders to understand issues
Public Engagement	Involve	Community Survey, Workshops, Focus Groups to understand issues
Draft Regulations	Consult	Open houses, Survey, and interviews to obtain feedback on potential approaches

The proposed community engagement process includes:

- A statistically-significant community survey to determine the level of community support;
- Workshops and stakeholder meetings to identify key issues;
- Open houses to get public feedback on proposed directions and options; and
- Website and social media updates to keep the public informed.

Public engagement accounts for six months of the work plan. Staff believe this allocation of time is justified given the complexity of the issue, the high level of technical detail, and given that the support for detached suites was lower than secondary suites in the 2009 and 2014 surveys.



## ALTERNATIVES

1. That Council approve the recommendation as outlined in the staff report.

The implications of this alternative are discussed in detail in the latter sections of this report.

2. That Council reject the recommendation as outlined in the staff report.

Should Council decide to reject the recommendation, alternate approaches could include:

### Public engagement

- a) Council could direct staff to prepare the technical report and draft regulations, without the typical public engagement program, for Council's consideration. Public input would be received through the standard bylaw approval process, at Committee of the Whole, and Public Hearing.

The advantage of this approach is that draft regulations could be completed relatively quickly, within about six months. The disadvantage is that if there is considerable public opposition and/or changes need to be made, the process could be slowed down. In addition, without public consultation, key concerns may be missed or not fully understood.

- b) Council could direct staff to undertake the technical report and draft regulations without the typical early public engagement program. At the Council meeting, Council could provide direction on changes to draft regulations and then direct staff to consult with the public prior to presenting final draft regulations for Council's consideration.

The advantage of this approach is that it could be achieved in an approximate nine-month timeline and would allow opportunities for public input on the draft regulations. The drawback may be that the public feedback comes later in the process after initial regulations have been developed.

### Scope of work

- a) Council could direct staff to include areas outside the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB). The advantage of this approach is that it could result in a greater number of dwelling units. The drawback is that it does not meet Official Community Plan and Regional Growth Strategy principles of urban containment. This approach would likely draw considerable public concern, result in a need for extensive public consultation, and could impact core directions of the Official Community Plan. It also may require that the Terms of Reference be expanded to include secondary suites, which are now prohibited outside the Urban Containment Boundary. Staff do not support expanding the garden suite study beyond the Urban Containment Boundary.
- b) Council could direct staff to explore allowing both a secondary suite and a garden suite on the same lot. The advantage of this approach is that it could result in a greater number of dwelling units. The drawback is that it could result in considerable neighbourhood impact and privacy concerns. Staff do not advise this at this time. It could be revisited in the future.

3. That Council provide alternate direction to staff.

Should Council provide alternate direction to staff that changes the scope of the study, amendments would be required to the Terms of Reference.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The project, as presented in the Terms of Reference, is proposed to be completed by the District of Saanich staff, with a budget of \$45,000. The cost of this planning initiative is not captured in the current 2017 District of Saanich's Financial Plan.

If Council wishes to undertake this planning initiative in 2017 the relevant funds could be allocated from the Council Contingency for Strategic Initiatives. Alternatively, this planning initiative could be considered for funding as part of Council's 2018 budget deliberations.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

The subject initiative is included in the District of Saanich 2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan. As such, there are no implications to the current Strategic Plan.

### **PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Policy**

The following District of Saanich and Capital Regional District policies are the most applicable to this initiative.

#### Official Community Plan (2008)

- 4.2.1.1 "Support and implement the eight strategic initiatives of the Regional Growth Strategy, namely: Keep urban settlement compact; Protect the integrity of rural communities; Protect regional green and blue spaces; Manage natural resources and the environment sustainably; Build complete communities; Improve housing affordability; Increase transportation choice; and Strengthen the regional economy."
- 4.2.1.2 "Maintain the Urban Containment Boundary as the principal tool for growth management in Saanich, and encourage all new development to locate within the Urban Containment Boundary."
- 4.2.1.5 "Consider the capacity of all types of infrastructure including municipal services, schools, social services, and open spaces when reviewing growth options."
- 4.2.4.1 "Foster sustainable and pedestrian and cycling-friendly neighbourhoods by...supporting a range of housing choices, by type, tenure and price."
- 4.2.3.9 "Support the following building types and uses in 'Villages':
  - Small lot single family houses (up to 2 storeys)
  - Carriage/coach houses (up to 2 storeys)
  - Town houses (up to 3 storeys)
  - Low-rise residential (3-4 storeys)
  - Mixed-use (commercial/residential) (3-4 storeys)

- Civic and institutional (generally up to 3 storeys).”
- 5.1.2.6 “Work with the Capital Regional District and other stakeholders to implement the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy.”
- 5.1.2.9 “Encourage the creation of affordable and special needs housing by reviewing regulatory bylaws and fee structures to remove development barriers and provide flexibility and incentives.”
- 5.1.2.10 “Review existing regulations to consider the provision of a wide range of alternative housing types, such as ‘flex housing’ and ‘granny flats.’ ”
- 5.1.2.17 “Support the provision of a range of seniors housing and innovative care options within ‘Centres,’ ‘Villages,’ and Neighbourhoods, to enable people to ‘age in place.’ ”

#### Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (2007)

Strategy 2 “Establish and enhance pro-affordability local government policies and regulations across the region.”

- 2a “The CRD and municipalities to review and research best practices in the areas of zoning and subdivision bylaws to permit greater densification and inclusionary zoning (more-affordable housing sites) including:
- Permitting secondary suites
  - Planning for increased densities in downtown areas and regional centres
  - Encouraging small lot infill in existing neighbourhoods
  - Promoting mixed-use developments in town-centre areas
  - Encouraging flexible housing forms.”

#### Regional Growth Strategy (2003)

- 1.1 “Keep Urban Settlement Compact.”
- 1.1.1 “The CRD and member municipalities agree to designate in their Official Community Plans, Urban Containment and Servicing Areas consistent with the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area depicted in Map 3, and to further adopt associated policies regarding the protection, buffering and long term maintenance of its boundary.”
- 1.1.3 “The CRD and member municipalities agree to designate as appropriate in their Official Community Plans, the major centres shown on Map 3, consistent with the guidelines set out in Table 2, recognizing that major centre boundaries and performance guidelines are conceptual, and that municipalities will undertake detailed centre planning through their Official Community Plan and zoning processes. They further agree to review, modify and implement policies to best facilitate growth and investment in the centres in partnership with the CRD, and to permit the designation and development of additional major centres only as an outcome of a comprehensive 5-year review of the Regional Growth Strategy.”

- 1.1.4 “The municipalities of Victoria, Saanich, Oak Bay, and Esquimalt agree to include in regional context statements, direction to amend their Official Community Plans to increase by 2011 their designated planned capacity for ground-oriented housing by 5%, over the levels determined by their Official Community Plans at the date of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy bylaw, in locations consistent with the performance criteria for complete communities set out in Initiative 3.1.”

### **Policy Analysis**

Policy contained within the District of Saanich’s Official Community Plan (OCP) and the CRD’s Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (RHAS) and Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) supports reviewing bylaws and policies in support of expanding housing options within neighbourhoods. Following the legalization of secondary suites, an exploration of allowing garden suites furthers this objective. An overview of municipal and regional policy follows below.

#### Review Regulations in Support of Housing Affordability

There is strong policy within the Official Community Plan and the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy to review municipal bylaws to look for ways to enhance housing affordability, and expand the supply, choice and flexibility of housing stock. This is reflected in Official Community Plan Policy 5.1.2.10 and Regional Housing Affordability Strategy 2, which identifies “flex housing” and “granny flats” as potential housing options. “Flex” or “flexible” housing means housing that is flexible and versatile so that it can be adapted to the varying and changing needs of a household. This applies to garden suites because they allow households to expand, contract, and can be built to accessible housing standards for those with disabilities. “Granny flats” or garden suites can allow homeowners to age-in-place, and can provide rental income to those who need it.

#### Support Neighbourhood Infill

The Official Community Plan contains policy that determines where growth is encouraged geographically. While most growth will occur within urban “Centres” and “Villages,” the Official Community Plan supports infill within neighbourhoods that occurs on a “limited scale” and is done sensitively to maintain neighbourhood character. Policy 4.2.4.1 supports fostering sustainable and pedestrian- and cycling-friendly neighbourhoods by “supporting a range of housing choices, by type, tenure, and price.”

Garden suites as a form of infill provide an attractive, detached rental option within established neighbourhoods. They may provide more privacy and are often easier to construct than secondary suites within a primary dwelling. Many communities have recently elected to increase housing supply by permitting attached and detached suites in established neighbourhoods in this manner. There is a lot of experience from other communities in BC and outside the province from which the District of Saanich can draw.

#### Carriage Houses in Centres and Villages

Official Community Plan policy supports a slightly different definition of “garden suite” depending on whether a lot is located within a “Centre”/“Village” or within a predominately single family neighbourhood. Within “Centres” and “Villages”, Policy 4.2.3.9 supports carriage/coach houses up to two storeys. The Regional Growth Strategy in Policy 1.1.3 also encourages growth and investment in Centres.

Within established single family neighbourhoods, the Official Community Plan supports “granny flats” and limited infill that is sensitive to neighbourhood character. The study Terms of

Reference includes an examination of height, size, and siting and will take into consideration these two policies and goals for infill within, and outside of, “Centres” and “Villages”.

#### Support for Compact Growth and Complete Communities

The Official Community Plan contains policy that determines how growth will occur. Policy 4.2.1.1 supports the Regional Growth Strategy’s vision for urban, compact future growth and the provision of housing within walkable, sustainable neighbourhoods and complete communities. Garden suites provide the opportunity to increase population in areas that are served by local amenities, infrastructure, and services within the Urban Containment Boundary.

#### Growth within the Urban Containment Boundary

The Terms of Reference recommends examining garden suite options within the Urban Containment Boundary based on Official Community Plan policy and to be consistent with the approach taken with secondary suites. The need for increasing housing stock must be considered alongside policy direction to locate future growth within the Urban Containment Boundary and build complete, sustainable communities.

The District of Saanich has committed to growth management primarily through use of the Urban Containment Boundary. This focus on containing growth within urban areas is clearly stated in Official Community Plan Policy 4.2.1.2, “to encourage all new development to locate within the Urban Containment Boundary,” and in the Regional Growth Strategy Policy 1.1 which proposes, “keeping urban areas compact and largely contained within a Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Area.” Ground-oriented housing such as garden suites are one measure that satisfies this policy direction and meets the Regional Growth Strategy’s direction to increase the capacity of urban areas to accommodate more growth. Official Community Plan Policy 4.2.1.5 also supports compact urban growth by requiring a consideration of infrastructure capacity when considering growth options.

Limiting the geographical scope to lots within the Urban Containment Boundary meets key policy goals to encourage compact development, reduce sprawl, make cost-effective use of existing municipal infrastructure and services, encourage lower-carbon patterns of urban development, support density close to transit, and protect agricultural land and minimize conflicts between urban and rural areas.

The research for this Terms of Reference found a similar approach used by Kelowna, where garden suites are restricted outside the Permanent Growth Boundary. Adding residential units to rural lots can create potential agricultural conflicts and may serve as a disincentive to use rural parcels for agricultural uses.

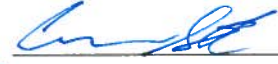
## **CONCLUSION**

Garden suites are an opportunity to add to the choice and supply of permanent rental housing within the District of Saanich’s established single family neighbourhoods. They also require careful consideration to ensure compatibility with the neighbourhood context.

The Official Community Plan contains policy in support of expanding housing choice and increasing the supply of affordable housing. The District of Saanich has commitments through its endorsement of the Regional Growth Strategy and Regional Housing Affordability Strategy to increase the number of housing units within the urban area. While garden suites and other

forms of infill are not expected to add a large number of dwelling units, all opportunities are important within the region.

Council has directed a study be done to examine options for garden suites in Saanich. The attached Terms of Reference allows for a comprehensive analysis and full public consultation on the issue prior to Council's consideration of potential regulatory changes. To initiate the project in 2017, Council would need to allocate funds from the Council Contingency for Strategic Initiatives.

Prepared by   
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PH/ads  
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cc: Paul Thorkleson, Administrator  
Graham Barbour, Manager of Inspection Services  
Jarret Matanowitsch, Manager of Current Planning

**ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:**

I endorse the recommendation from the Director of Planning.

  
for Paul Thorkleson, Administrator