



Guide to Residential Suites



Kamloops.ca/ResidentialSuites

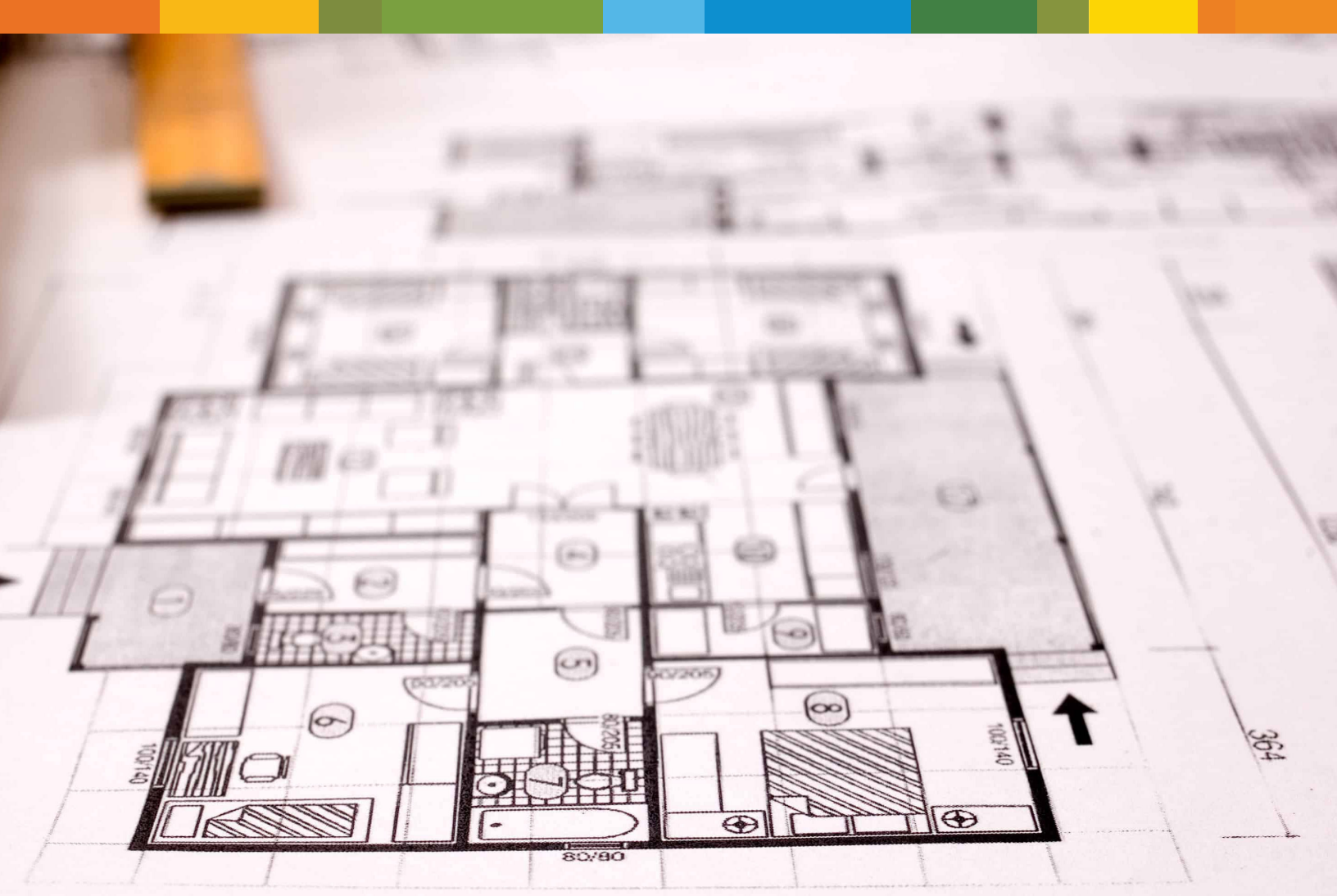


Canada's Tournament Capital



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INTRODUCTION

In July 2019, following an extensive research and engagement process, Council amended the Zoning Bylaw to allow secondary suites and garden suites in more of the city's urban areas.

Residential suites contribute to the city's affordable rental housing stock and can also act as mortgage helpers by making home ownership more attainable. Suites built to BC Building Code standards under a building permit help to protect the health and safety of homeowners and tenants, and suites built in accordance with zoning regulations help minimize their impact on neighbourhoods. Residential suites also help increase density in an efficient and sustainable way by making use of existing services and infrastructure.

This guide provides an overview of the types of residential suites, where they are permitted, and the process to build a new suite or legalize an existing one. The guide also includes helpful information on the City's permitting and approvals process and some frequently asked questions about residential suites.

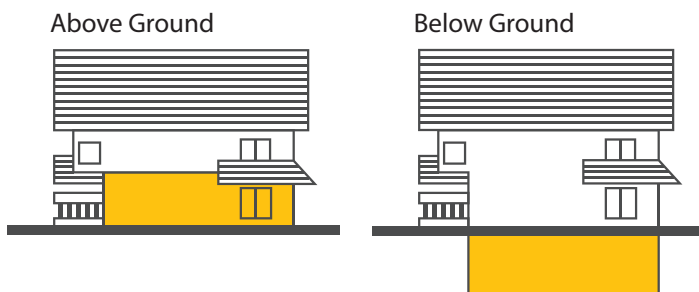
TYPES OF RESIDENTIAL SUITES

Depending on the municipality, residential suites can be defined or referred to in different ways. The City of Kamloops identifies three types of residential suites—secondary suites, garden suites, and carriage suites. The City’s definitions for these three types of residential suites are summarized below.

Note: This document is for general guidance. For specific legal definitions and requirements, please refer to the City’s Zoning Bylaw and to KAMPLAN: City of Kamloops Official Community Plan (OCP), which can be viewed at Kamloops.ca/KAMPLAN.

SECONDARY SUITE

A second dwelling unit with a floor area that does not exceed 90 m² (969 sq. ft.) and that takes up less than 40% of the total living area in a single-family home. The secondary suite can be located either above or below ground (e.g. basement suite).



What is a dwelling unit?

Two or more rooms for residential use with a bathroom, sleeping areas, and a maximum of one kitchen.

GARDEN SUITE or CARRIAGE SUITE

A separate, self-contained dwelling unit that is smaller than and accessory to the main home (a single-family home with no other dwelling units).



GARDEN SUITE

- One storey
- 80 m² (861 sq. ft.) maximum floor area

CARRIAGE SUITE

- Two storeys
- 80 m² maximum building footprint
- 95 m² (1,022 sq. ft.) maximum living space



WHERE RESIDENTIAL SUITES ARE PERMITTED

Secondary suites and garden suites are permitted in the following zones:

- RS-1, RS-1S, RS-4, and RS-5
- RT-1, RT-2 (only Urban Residential lots, as per the OCP), and RT-3
- RM-2A
- CD-1, and CD-5 (no suites on consecutive lots, corner lots, or lots fronting a cul-de-sac bulb)

Carriage suites are only permitted in the RS-1S zone. Carriage suites will only be considered where the property is one of the following:

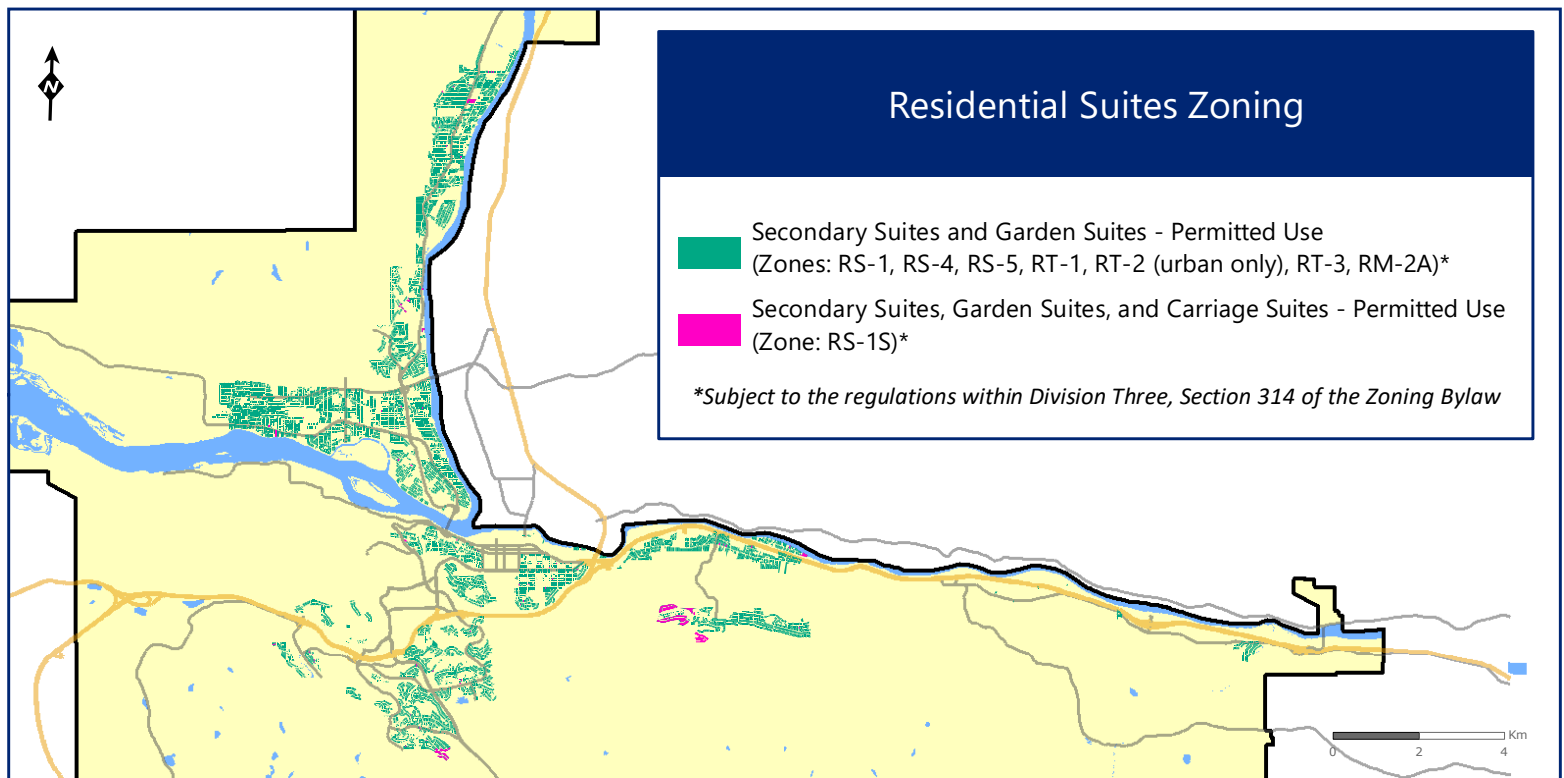
- a double-fronting lot (a lot that fronts two streets)
- a corner lot with approved access from two street fronts
- a lot with lane (alley) access
- a lot that can accommodate a 4.5 m wide driveway to the carriage suite

What zone do I live in?

Check your zoning and property information on **CityMap**, which is available on the City's website at Kamloops.ca/CityMap.

CityMap is the City's web mapping application. It allows users to view zoning, land use, utilities, community facilities, development applications, historical maps, and other helpful information on a property-by-property basis.

MAP 1 ► RESIDENTIAL SUITES ZONING – PERMITTED USE



Note: This map is intended to show where the different types of residential suites are generally permitted in the city. The CD-1 and CD-5 zones are comprehensive development zones with distinct regulations and are not shown. This map is for general guidance only and may contain inaccuracies. Please view CityMap and the Zoning Bylaw for the most current, specific, and accurate zoning information, or contact the Planning and Development Division at 250-828-3561 or planning@kamloops.ca.

A residential suite is only permitted on a lot with a single-family home and no other dwelling units. What this means is that:

- Residential suites are not permitted on lots with duplexes
- A single-family lot cannot have a secondary suite and a garden or carriage suite

A residential suite is only permitted on a lot that meets the following minimum requirements:

- 464 m² in area (just under 5,000 sq. ft.)
- 15 m (just under 50 ft.) lot width and 15 m street frontage (or the minimum lot width and street frontage of the zone in which the suite is permitted, whichever is greater)

Other zoning regulations include:

- Boarders and lodgers are not permitted on a lot with a single-family home and a residential suite
- 40% of the front yard must be landscaped, and vehicles cannot be parked in the landscaped area (e.g. on a 15 m wide lot, 6 m would need to be landscaped)
- Residential suites are not permitted on panhandle lots
- The residential suite cannot be subdivided from the principal dwelling—both the suite and the home must be registered under the same title as a single real estate entity
- Residential suites are not permitted in hazardous areas with unstable soils, including the silt bluffs

For a **garden or carriage suite**:

- A development permit is required prior to a building permit being issued
- No living space or storage space is permitted below the 200-year flood plain, excluding an entrance foyer
- The suite building cannot cover more than 12% of the total lot area (to a maximum of 80 m²)
- The principal building, garden or carriage suite, and all other accessory buildings together cannot cover more than 40% of the total lot area

To view zoning regulations for residential suites in more detail, including siting and height requirements, please refer to the Zoning Bylaw or chat with City staff in the Planning and Development Division at 250-828-3561.

***Lot width** is the average distance between sides of the lot when measured at the street front and rear lot lines.*

*A **boarder or lodger** is a renter living in a room (without a kitchen) in a home occupied by a family to which the renter is not related by blood or marriage.*

***Silt bluffs** are benchland areas formed from the erosion of glacial lakes in the South Thompson River valley. These areas are susceptible to sinkholes, underground tunneling, landslides, and runoff.*



HOW MANY PARKING SPACES DO I NEED?

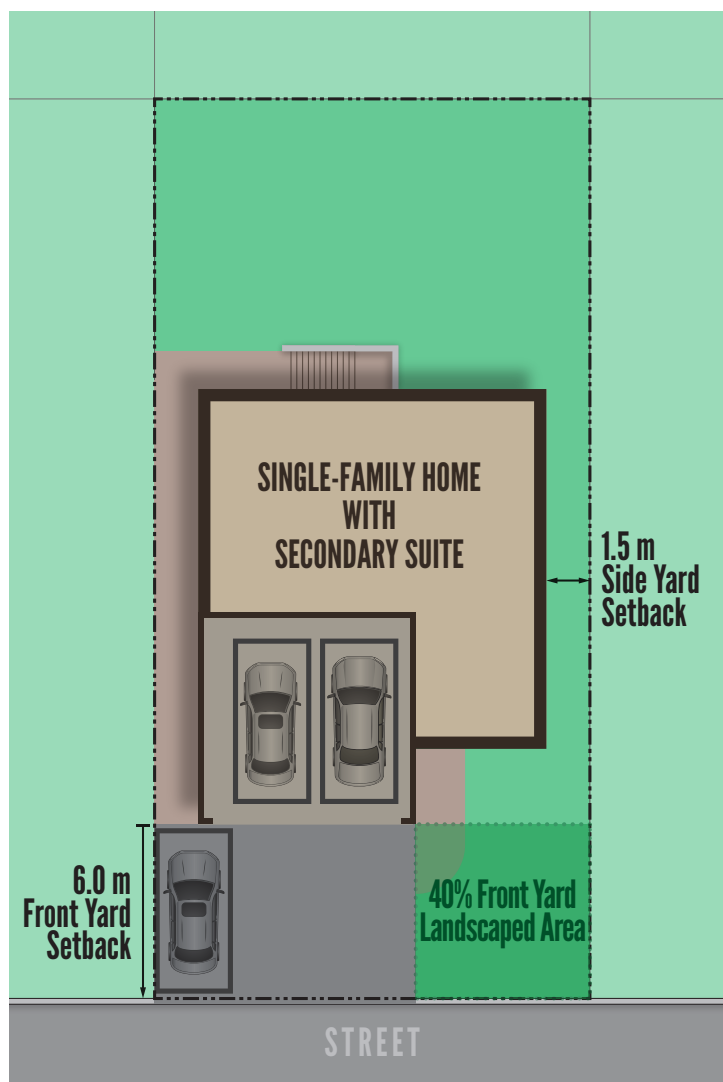
On a lot with a single-family home and a residential suite, three unstacked parking spaces must be provided (see page 9 for exceptions). Each space must be a minimum 2.7 m in width and 5.7 m in length, and vehicles cannot be parked in landscaped areas. Further clarification on what “unstacked” parking means and areas where the third parking space is not required are noted below.

UNSTACKED PARKING SPACES

The requirement to have three unstacked parking spaces does not mean that all of the parking spaces have to be located beside each other on the lot. What the requirement means is that vehicles must be able to enter and exit each of the three parking spaces without requiring other parked vehicles to be moved.

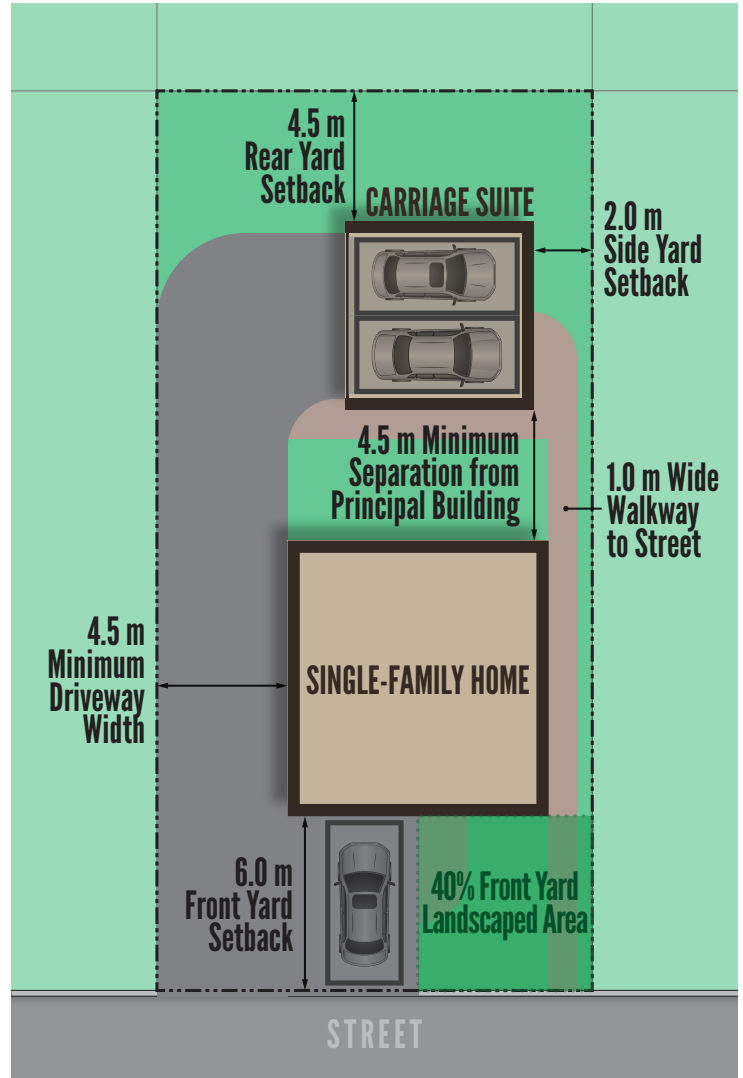
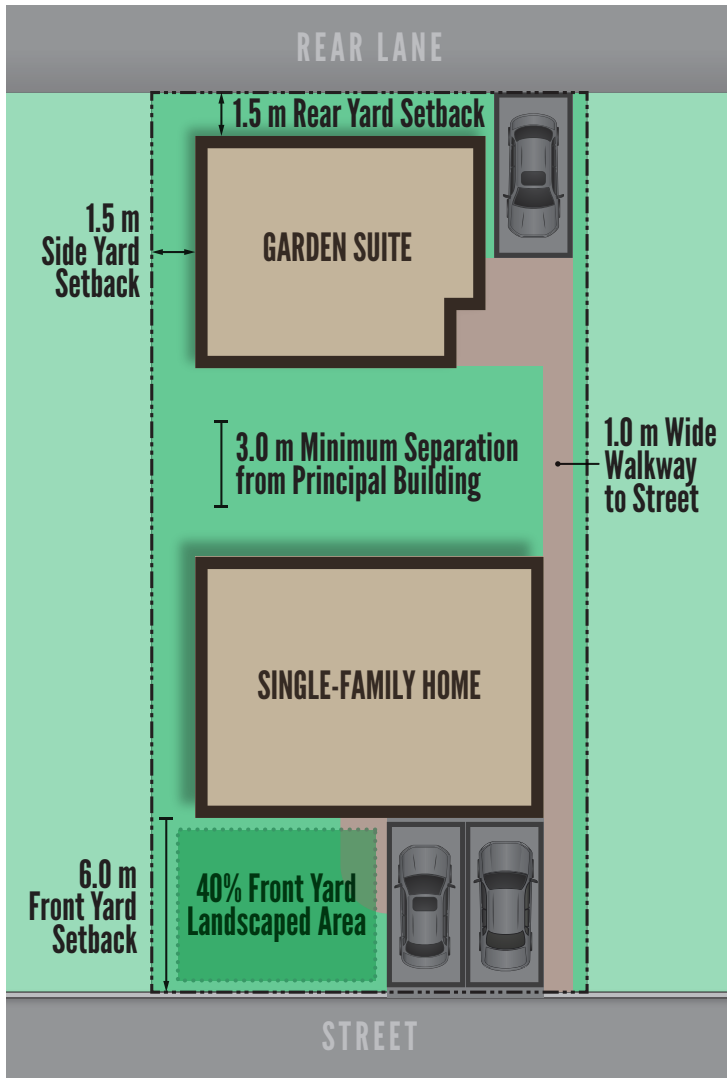
Please see the diagrams to the right for some examples that show how parking could be configured on the smallest permitted lot size (464 m² lot area and 15 m lot width and street frontage) for each of the different types of residential suites.

“...vehicles must be able to enter and exit each of the three parking spaces without requiring other parked vehicles to be moved.”



Example A

Single-Family Home with Secondary Suite
(interior lot, no lane access)



Example B

Single-Family Home with Garden Suite
(interior lot, lane access)

Example C

Single-Family Home with Carriage Suite
(interior lot, no lane access)



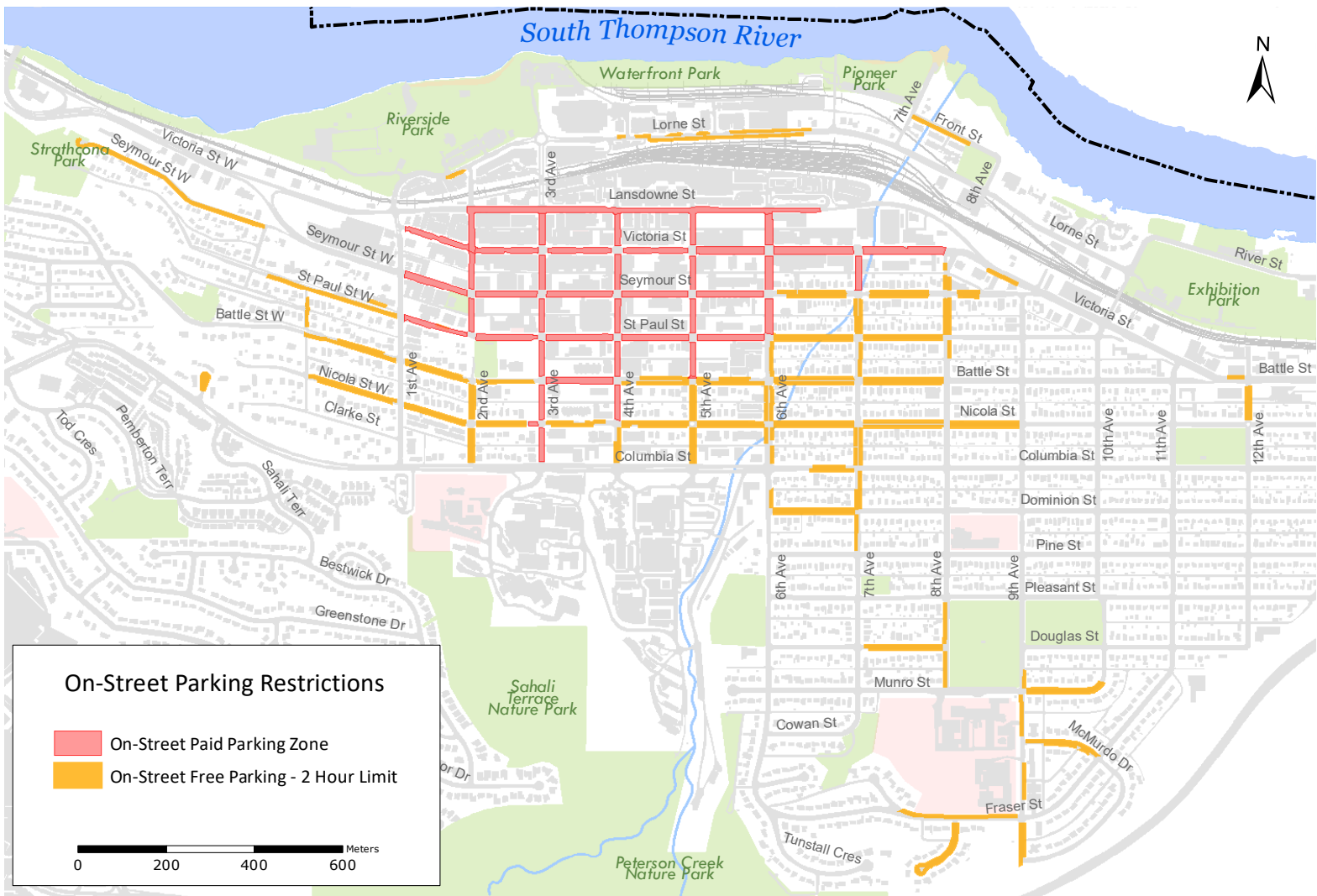
PARKING FLEXIBILITY

Homeowners in areas where the streets have parking restrictions (e.g. time limits or pay parking) can apply for up to two residential parking permits to park their vehicles on the street.

If you are a homeowner on a street with on-street parking restrictions (see Map 2 below) and you are eligible to apply for a residential parking permit, you may not have to provide a third off-street parking space for your suite.

These parking restricted areas are found on certain blocks within the Downtown, West End, and Sagebrush neighbourhoods and are generally within walking distance of key amenities, including shops, restaurants, health services, and community facilities. The intent of this regulation is to provide some flexibility in parking requirements for residents living in areas with higher walkability and where a greater percentage of residents commute to work by walking, cycling, or taking transit, according to Census data.

MAP 2 ► ON-STREET PARKING RESTRICTIONS



Note: Areas with on-street parking restrictions are subject to change. Please contact Bylaw Services at 250-828-3409 or bylaws@kamloops.ca for the most up-to-date information.



HOW GARDEN AND CARRIAGE SUITES SHOULD LOOK

Municipalities can regulate the form and character (i.e. the “look and feel”) of development through development permit areas (DPAs) found within official community plans like KAMPLAN. In DPAs, a development permit is required prior to obtaining a building permit and proceeding with approved construction.

For **secondary suites** on lots that meet zoning regulations, a development permit is not required prior to obtaining a building permit.

For **garden or carriage suites**, a development permit is required prior to obtaining a building permit and proceeding with approved construction.

If the proposed construction has a value of \$250,000 or less and a rezoning is not required, the development permit can be issued by staff and may not require Council’s approval.

Intensive Residential Development Permit

Garden suites, carriage suites, and single-family homes with secondary suites on lots with less than 464 m² in area are considered intensive residential development, and their form and character are regulated under the Intensive Residential DPA guidelines in the OCP. Applicants must obtain a development permit prior to obtaining a building permit for these types of intensive residential development.

The Intensive Residential DPA guidelines can be found in Section F of the OCP, which is available online at Kamloops.ca/KAMPLAN.

Please contact City staff in the Planning and Development Division at 250-828-3561 for more information.

BUILDING A NEW SUITE OR LEGALIZING AN EXISTING SUITE

The City's Building Bylaw regulates the construction, alteration, repair, and demolition of buildings and structures for the health, safety, and protection of people and property. It regulates items such as:

- building permits, plumbing permits, and other types of permits
- inspections and occupancy
- fees and charges

THE BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS

A building permit from the City is required prior to constructing a new residential suite or legalizing an existing secondary suite.

A legal residential suite is a suite that complies with zoning regulations and that has been constructed to BC Building Code (BCBC) requirements under a valid building permit.

Building permit applications need to include items such as:

- Construction value for the work, which includes materials and labour
- A site plan showing (with dimensions):
 - the additional parking space required for the suite
 - the access (walkway, stairs) to the suite
- Plans drawn to scale showing:
 - overall floor plans for the building with dimensions
 - fire separation location, rating, and construction details
 - fire resistance rating and details of load-bearing elements (walls, beams, columns)
 - sound ratings and details
 - heating and ventilation details
 - suite layout showing room uses, door sizes and swing, bedrooms, etc. (with dimensions)
 - bedroom window sizes, including location and dimensions of window wells
 - smoke alarm locations and type
 - mechanical room location and separation

Once the work is complete, a final inspection is requested by the applicant prior to occupancy.

Please view the City's **Secondary Suite Requirements** guide at Kamloops.ca/ResidentialSuites or contact the Building Inspection Section at 250-828-3554 for more information on construction requirements for residential suites.

BC Building Code

The BC Building Code (BCBC) is a provincial regulation that governs how new construction, alterations to existing buildings, repairs, and demolition are completed. The BCBC sets minimum requirements for safety, health, accessibility, fire and structural protection of buildings, and energy and water efficiency.

Similar to the City's Zoning Bylaw, the BCBC notes that a secondary suite and other dwelling unit in a house must be a single real estate entity, and that the suite may not be separately strata-titled or otherwise subdivided.

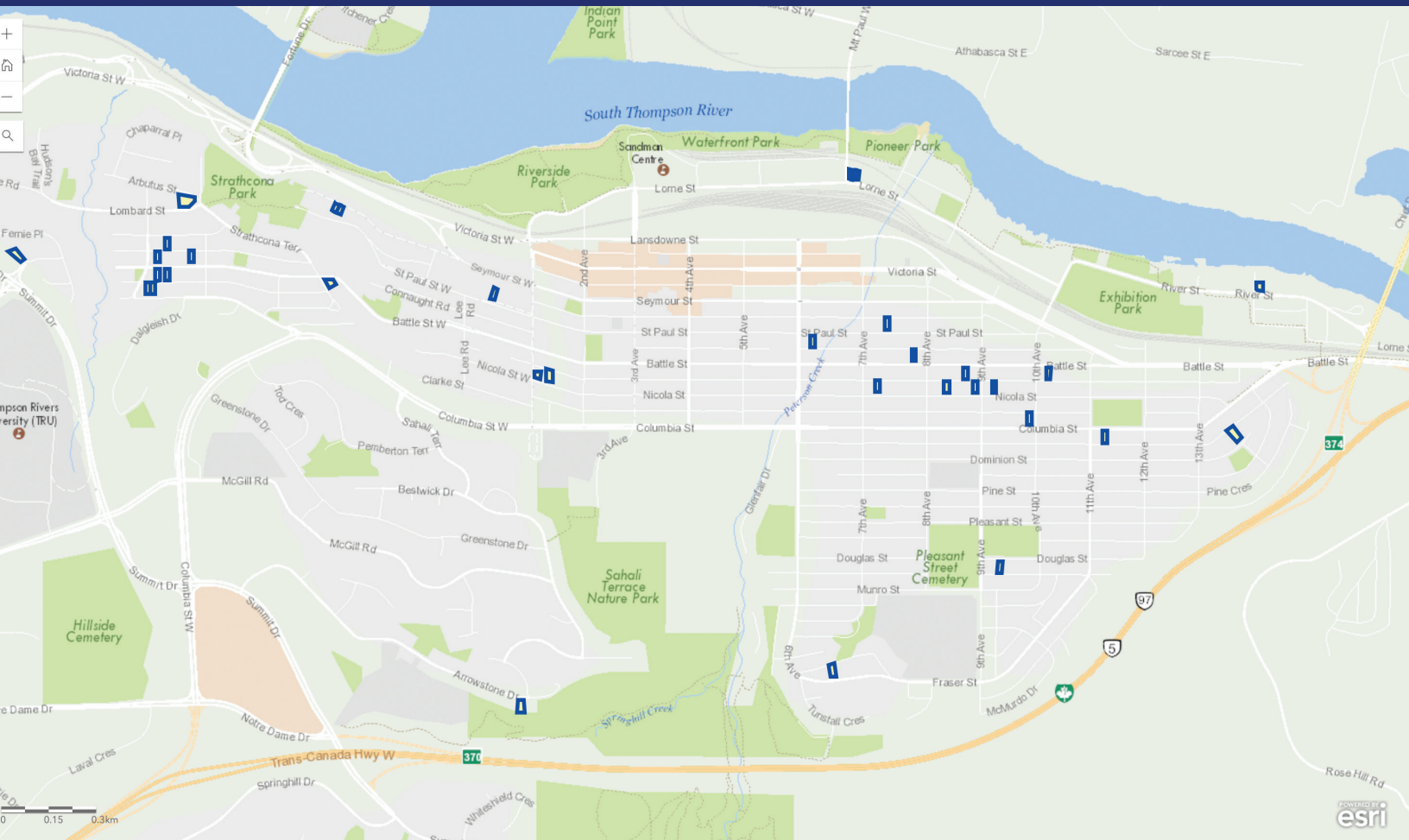
Recent revisions to the BCBC remove the floor area limits for a secondary suite (90m² total floor space and less than 40% of the livable space of the building). The City's Zoning Bylaw maintains these maximums.

Please note that although the BCBC allows secondary suites in more housing types than single-family homes, the City's Zoning Bylaw may not.

Residential Suite Registry



This map shows legal residential suites in Kamloops that have been constructed to BC Building Code requirements under a building permit. These suites have been inspected and received occupancy.



RESIDENTIAL SUITE REGISTRY

The City has developed a **Residential Suite Registry**—an interactive map that shows the location of all legal residential suites constructed under a building permit within municipal boundaries. It is available online at Kamloops.ca/ResidentialSuites.

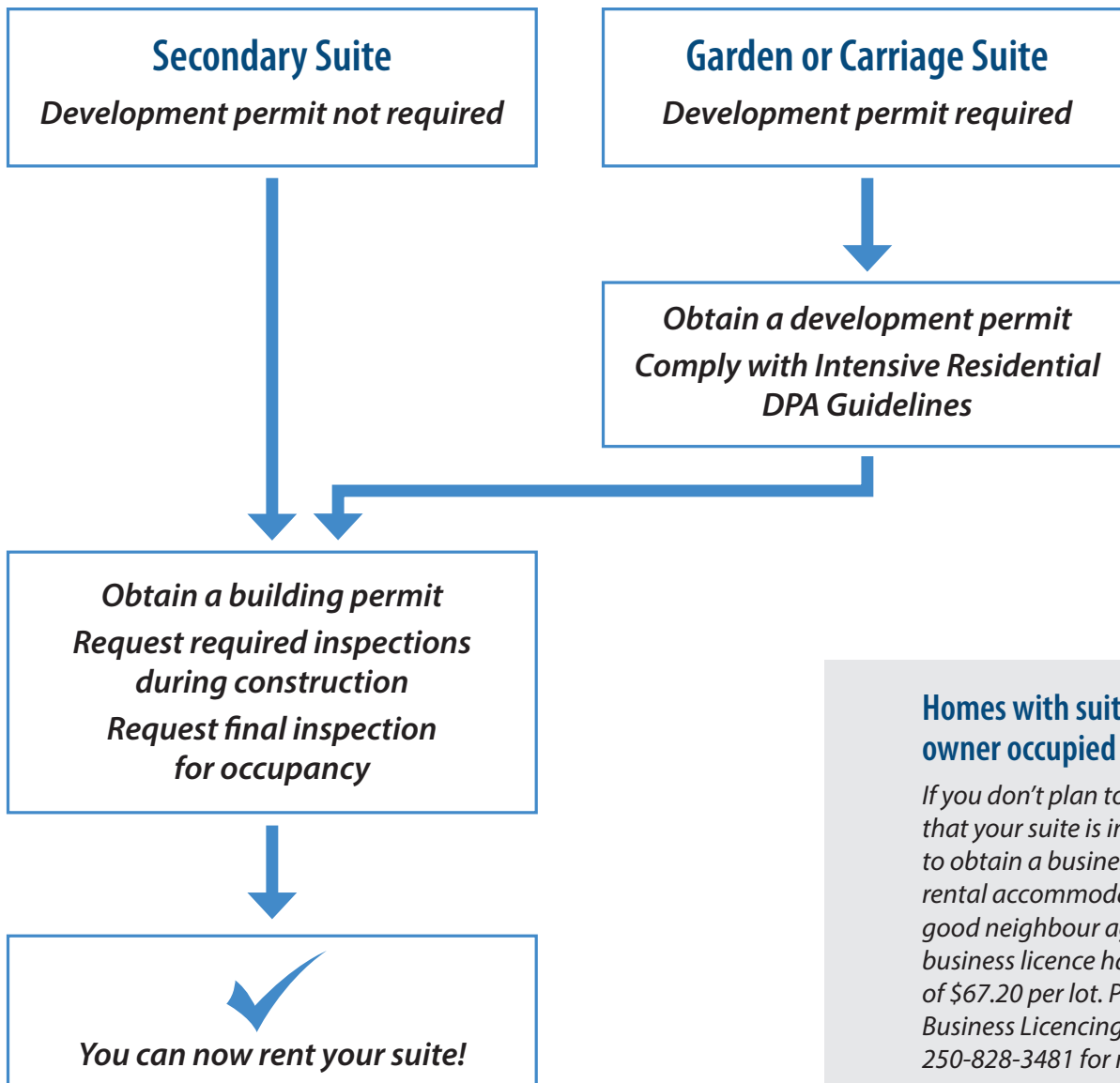
Homeowners with a legal residential suite can use this tool to stand out in the rental market. Tenants looking for places to rent can use the map to see if a suite is legal and built to BC Building Code requirements under a building permit. The **Residential Suite Registry** will be updated as new residential suites are approved. Once a homeowner has passed final inspection and received occupancy for their suite, it will be automatically added to the registry.



PERMITS AND APPROVALS

This flow chart shows how the permitting and approvals process works when the residential suite is permitted on the applicant's lot, meets all zoning requirements, and is under \$250,000 in construction value. If the residential suite is not permitted, requires a zoning variance, or is over \$250,000 in construction value, the application will require a Public Hearing and Council approval.

Carriage suites typically require a rezoning as they are only permitted in the RS-1S zone. Please contact the Planning and Development Division at 250-828-3561 or planning@kamloops.ca for more information.



Homes with suites that are not owner occupied

If you don't plan to live in the home that your suite is in, you'll also need to obtain a business licence for your rental accommodation and sign a good neighbour agreement. The business licence has an annual fee of \$67.20 per lot. Please contact the Business Licencing office at 250-828-3481 for more information.



APPLICATION FEES AND PROCESSING TIMES

| Permit Type | Fees | Processing Times | Council Approval |
|--|---------|------------------|------------------|
| Development permit (garden or carriage suites only) | | | |
| • up to \$250,000 construction value | \$500 | 4-6 weeks | No |
| • over \$250,000 construction value | \$1,000 | 4-6 weeks | Yes |
| Building permit (application fee*) | | | |
| • for secondary suites | \$50 | Varies | No |
| • for garden or carriage suites | \$100 | Varies | No |

**Additional building permit fees (based on construction value) as well as plumbing permit fees will apply. Development Cost Charges (DCCs) will apply to garden and carriage suites. Fees are subject to change. Contact the Building Inspection Section at 250-828-3554 or building@kamloops.ca for more information.*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Please see below for answers to some common questions about residential suites.

▶ Can I have a suite?

If you have or are building a single-family home and your lot is in a zone that permits a residential suite and your lot complies with zoning regulations, then you may be eligible to have a residential suite. However, this does not mean that your suite is legal. A legal residential suite is a suite that complies with zoning regulations and that has been constructed to BC Building Code (BCBC) requirements under a valid building permit.

▶ What zone do I live in?

You can check your zoning and property information on CityMap, which is available on the City's website at Kamloops.ca/CityMap. CityMap is the City's web mapping application. It allows users to view zoning, land use, utilities, community facilities, development applications, historical maps, and other helpful information on a property-by-property basis.

▶ My home is in a zone that permits a suite. Is my suite legal?

Though your home may be on a lot where a suite is permitted under the zoning regulations, this only means that a suite is a permitted use of land on your lot. You will still need to obtain a building permit (and other necessary permits) to construct the suite or to legalize an existing suite, and to obtain occupancy following a final inspection when the suite is completed to BCBC standards. A suite constructed without a building permit is considered "construction without permit" and is not a legal residential suite.

▶ How many people can live in my suite?

The maximum occupancy of a single-family home with a residential suite is one family in the principal dwelling (the main part of the single-family home) and one family in the suite (a second dwelling unit within the single-family home). The Zoning Bylaw's definition of "family" has no limit on the number of people sharing a dwelling unit who are related by blood, marriage, adoption, or a foster care agreement; for unrelated people, the limit is three or less people per dwelling unit. If a homeowner rents out both the principal building and the residential suite (whether it is a secondary, garden, or carriage suite) to unrelated people, the maximum occupancy will be three people in the principal building and three people in the suite.

▶ What are the regulations for in-law suites?

The City identifies three types of residential suites—secondary suites, garden suites, and carriage suites. Definitions for these three types of suites can be found in this guide. In-law suites are not a distinct type of suite recognized by the City.

▶ I've heard the terms "boarders or lodgers." What is the difference between a boarder or lodger and an individual(s) renting my suite?

A boarder or lodger is a renter living in a room without a kitchen in a home occupied by a family to which the renter is not related by blood or marriage (a maximum of two boarders or lodgers are permitted in a home). A residential suite is a dwelling unit with sleeping and washroom areas as well as a kitchen. Boarders and lodgers are not permitted on a lot with a residential suite. There are also no additional off-street parking requirements for homes with boarders or lodgers, while a home with a residential suite must provide a third parking space (except in certain situations as outlined in the parking section of this guide).

▶ **My neighbour (or their tenant) keeps parking a car in front of my house. Can I get Bylaw Services to ticket or tow the vehicle?**

There is no private ownership over on-street parking. Someone parking in front of your home is generally not a bylaw infraction. Try speaking with your neighbour and seeing if you can address the issue. Check out on-street parking regulations in the Traffic Bylaw, which is available on the City's website.

▶ **Why are carriage suites not permitted in all of the same zones that permit secondary suites and garden suites?**

Garden and carriage suites are accessory residential dwelling units that are intended to be subordinate to (smaller than) the principal dwelling (the single-family home). Many residential neighbourhoods still feature bungalows and one-storey single-family homes. As a two-storey carriage suite may have a more significant impact on form and character in these neighbourhoods than a one-storey garden suite, they will continue to require a rezoning and Public Hearing process (except in the RS-1S zone, where they are already permitted).

Why are residential suites not permitted in suburban or rural areas?

- ▶ Water systems in most suburban and rural areas have limited capacity and are not designed for increased density. KAMPLAN focuses population growth in urban neighbourhoods with access to transit, community services, shopping, and employment. Adding density in urban areas makes it easier and more convenient for residents living in those areas to walk, cycle, or use transit to commute or get to key destinations, which, in turn, helps reduce emissions from single-occupancy vehicle trips and contributes to a more healthy and sustainable community.

Can I have a suite on my panhandle lot?

- ▶ No. Residential suites are only permitted on lots with a minimum 15 m (just under 50 ft.) in street frontage and 464 m² (just under 5,000 sq. ft.) in lot area.

▶ **I have two dogs living in my home. Can I have tenants living in my suite who have dogs of their own?**

No. A maximum of two dogs over the age of six months are allowed per parcel of land. These same limits apply to cats. Registered guide dogs and personal assistance dogs are exempt from the limit.

Will I receive a second garbage container for my suite?

- ▶ Homeowners wishing to acquire a second garbage container for their tenant(s) need to order them. For each garbage container ordered, a recycling cart must also be ordered. Each garbage and recycling container comes with a collection fee based on the size of the container (garbage containers come in different sizes and all recycling containers are 245 L in size). Please call the Civic Operations Centre at 250-828-3461 between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm, Monday to Friday, to order additional garbage and recycling containers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

| City Division | For questions and inquiries related to: |
|--|--|
| Planning and Development 250-828-3561 planning@kamloops.ca | Land use, zoning, property information, off-street parking requirements, development guidelines, and approvals process |
| Building Inspection 250-828-3554 building@kamloops.ca | BCBC and construction requirements, building and plumbing permits and fees, inspections, and occupancy |
| Bylaw Services 250-828-3409 bylaws@kamloops.ca | Noise, nuisance, and unsightly property issues; animal control issues; and on-street parking concerns |

For in-person questions and inquiries, please visit the Development, Engineering, and Sustainability Department at 105 Seymour Street (second floor).

HOURS OF OPERATION:

- Monday to Friday (closed on statutory holidays)
 - 8:30 am to 4:30 pm September (effective Tuesday following Labour Day weekend) to May
 - 8:00 am to 4:00 pm May (effective Tuesday following Victoria Day weekend) to September





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