

# Policy to Guide Discretion for Secondary Suites and Backyard Suites

Adopted by Council resolution March 12, 2018  
Amended by PUD2018-1323 January 14, 2019  
Amended by PUD2019-1203 November 18, 2019

## A. Planning Objectives

1. To provide guidance to the Development Authority in the use of discretion when evaluating suites.
2. To ensure opportunities for suites are balanced with the potential impacts they may have on communities.
3. To manage privacy issues related to Backyard Suites.

## B. Planning Principles for Secondary Suites and Backyard Suites

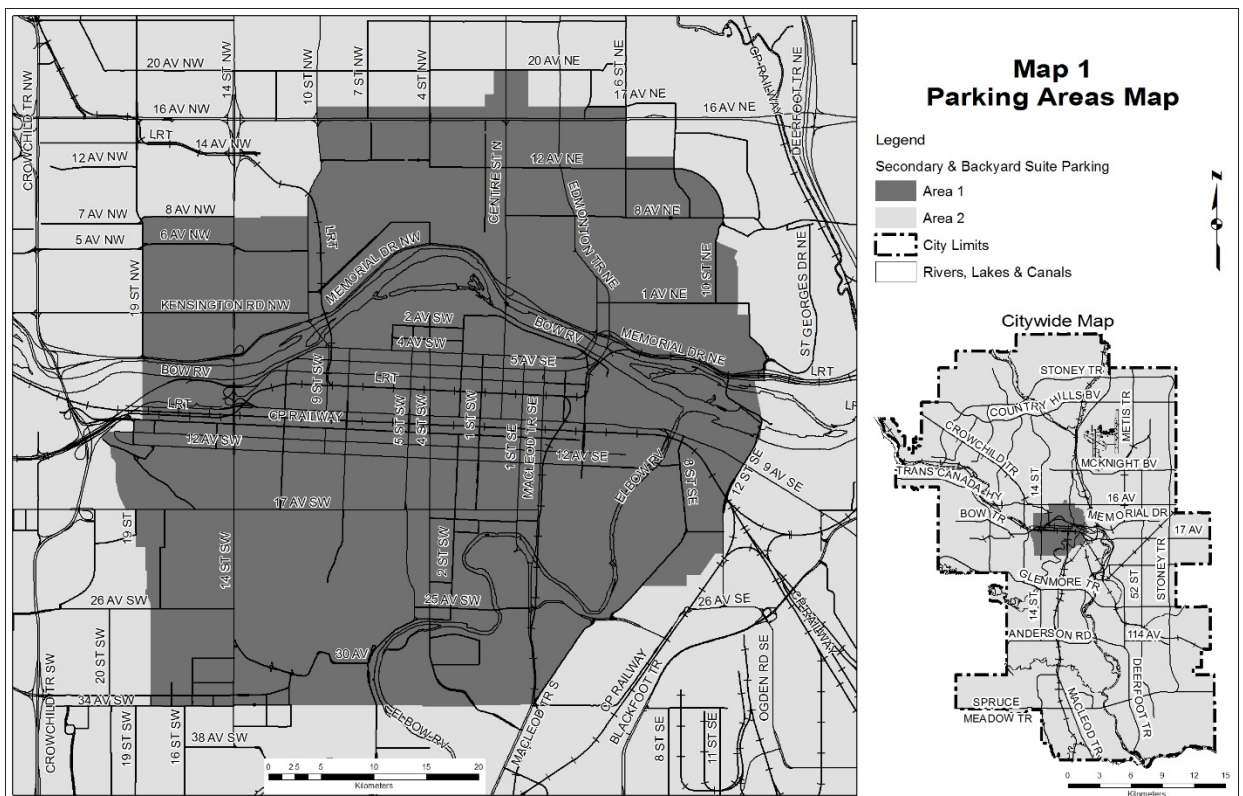
1. Parking
  - a. Unless otherwise referenced in Policy B.2, the required motor vehicle parking stall for a suite shall be provided on the parcel.
  - b. The required motor vehicle parking stall(s) for the primary Dwelling Unit shall not be considered as providing the required motor vehicle parking for a suite.
  - c. Required motor vehicle parking stalls for a suite are intended for the exclusive use of the suite and:
    - i. Should be accessed from a lane where a rear or side lane provides access to the parcel;
    - ii. Should be accessed from an existing front driveway where no rear or side lane provides access to the parcel;
    - iii. Where both a lane and front driveway exist, parking for the suite should be located in a convenient, accessible location with preference being from the lane, where possible;
    - iv. When accessed from a street, parking should be located such that the loss of on-street parking is minimized;
    - v. Should have unobstructed access to and from the adjacent street for vehicles using that motor vehicle stall;
    - vi. Shall not obstruct access to and from the adjacent street for vehicles using any other parking stall on the parcel.
  - d. The Development Authority may consider relaxing the parcel width requirements of the District when it is demonstrated the required motor vehicle parking stall is provided.
  - e. The Development Authority may consider relaxing the allowable maximum driveway width to accommodate a motor vehicle parking stall.
  - f. The Development Authority may consider relaxing the maximum parcel coverage in the District when the required motor vehicle parking stall is not provided in a private garage. Unless located on an existing driveway the stall should not be paved and should be on a permeable surface.

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## 2. Relaxation Considerations for Parking

- a. The Development Authority may consider a parking relaxation for a Secondary Suite or Backyard Suite based on the proximity of the suite to the Centre City and to frequent transit service. The Development Authority may consider relaxing the minimum parking requirements for a Secondary Suite or Backyard Suite where the suite is located:
  - i. in Area 1 of the Parking Areas Map
  - ii. in Area 2 of the Parking Areas Map and within:
    - A. 600 metres of a capital funded Light Rail Transit platform;
    - B. 400 metres of a Bus Rapid Transit stop; or
    - C. 400 metres of a bus service which generally has frequency of at least one bus every 20 minutes on weekdays from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM and a frequency of at least one bus every 30 minutes on weekday evenings from 6:00 PM to the end of service and on weekends during times of service.
- b. The Development Authority should consider natural and human-made barriers (e.g. waterbodies, landforms, skeletal and arterial roads) to accessing frequent transit service when considering a parking relaxation for a Secondary Suite or Backyard Suite.

Map 1: Parking Areas Map



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3. Amenity Space
  - a. The required amenity space for a suite should be provided on the parcel.
  - b. The design and orientation of a suite should ensure direct access with the required private amenity space.
4. Compatibility with other uses
  - a. The Development Authority may consider the compatibility of a proposed suite with other existing approved uses on the parcel. Should the parcel contain uses such as Home Occupations or Home Based Child Care Services, consideration should be given to the cumulative impacts when evaluating the appropriateness of a suite.
5. Cul-de-sacs
  - a. Parcels located on end bulbs of cul-de-sacs where no lane exists may present specific challenges in terms of on-street and off-street parking. The Development Authority shall consider the compatibility of a proposed suite when located on the bulb of a cul-de-sac. Consideration should be given to the cumulative impacts when evaluating the appropriateness of a suite in these locations.
6. Flood Hazard Areas
  - a. Secondary Suites are encouraged to be above grade when located in the Flood Fringe. Should the suite be located below grade, it must comply with the flood mitigation rules of the Land Use Bylaw.
7. Heritage
  - a. When a parcel is listed on the City Inventory of Evaluated Historic Resources, the Development Authority may consider relaxations to the required motor vehicle parking stalls (including the ability to accommodate the required parking off-site) in order to accommodate a Secondary Suite or Backyard Suite while retaining the existing building on the parcel.

**C. Additional Policies for Backyard Suites**

1. In addition to the previous policies, a Backyard Suite is subject to the following additional policies:
  - a. The maximum floor area for a Backyard Suite should not be considered as part of the maximum floor area for an Accessory Residential Building when located on the main floor of the building.
  - b. A balcony for a Backyard Suite is not considered a balcony for an Accessory Residential Building.
  - c. Balconies should orient towards the lane, or street if on a corner parcel.
  - d. Where a balcony would result in overlooking on an adjacent parcel, the proposed amenity space shall be relocated to the front or side of the Backyard Suite in the form of a deck or patio.

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- e. Window placement should allow light penetration into the suite while respecting the privacy of adjacent parcels. Off-setting, frosting, and placing windows to face the lane or street should be considered.
- f. Screening should be considered to mitigate privacy concerns with adjacent parcels. Screening may be achieved using landscaping, tree plantings or constructed screens.
- g. The building mass of a Backyard Suite should be moderated with respect to neighbouring properties using architectural elements such as stepped or sloped rooflines and articulated façades.
- h. Relaxation of the maximum building height may be supported to accommodate the peak portions of a sloped roof where the sloped roof reduces the scale and mass of the Backyard Suite.