



# REFERENCE GUIDE FOR SECONDARY SUITES AND SECOND OR ACCESSORY DWELLINGS

The following is a reference guide on secondary suites prepared by the Municipality of Cumberland Planning and Development Department.

## PERMITS & INSPECTIONS

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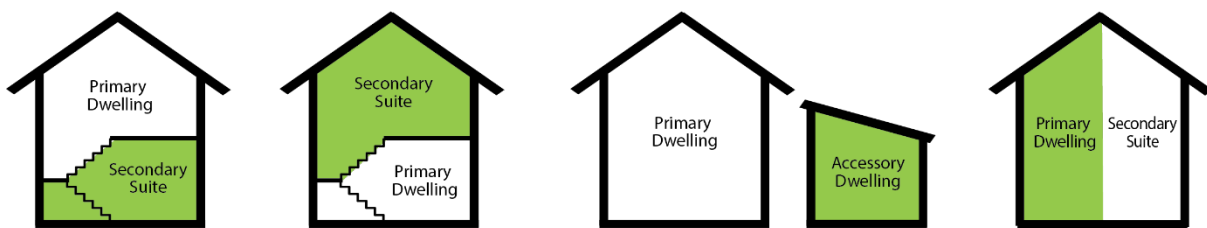
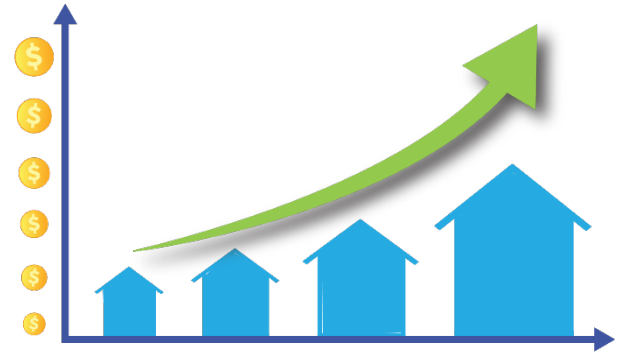
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An apartment or second dwelling are two options to potentially increase your income and have the added bonus of helping our communities address the current housing needs. There is money available from the provincial government to assist and encourage such minded homeowners to develop their properties. Such development and construction are subject not only to the requirements of these provincial programs but also require permits.

Let's look at a couple of the more popular scenarios and their considerations.



## BUILDING CODE

A property lot may be large enough for a second building on the same lot, or the principle or primary dwelling itself may be large enough to add a second private, self-contained apartment within the walls of the main building. This may be an apartment in the basement, an upper story or on the same level as the primary residence. Two self-contained dwelling units within the same building changes the use of that building to a multi-unit dwelling. This second unit, or apartment, may meet the requirements of a secondary suite and as such, be exempted from some of the requirements in the building code for multi-unit dwellings.

Let's look at some main differences between the two.

### Second Unit (Apartment)

- Stand alone or in principal unit.
- Greater than 80 sq. metres
- Greater than 80% principal dwelling
- Separated from rest of building by fire rated assembly
- Interconnected smoke alarms in each unit
- Smoke alarms in ancillary spaces

### Secondary Suite (Apartment)

- In principal unit only
- Less than 80 sq. metres
- Less than 80% principal dwelling
- Separated from rest on building by smoke barrier
- Interconnected fire alarm to both units
- Smoke alarms not necessarily in ancillary spaces

## BYLAW LAND USE

The land use bylaw places all lots in the municipality in specific zones. The zone determines if more than one dwelling is permitted on that lot. In the land use bylaw, two dwelling units, in the same building is a duplex. To construct or add a secondary suite to a dwelling in any zone, a duplex dwelling must be listed as one of the permitted uses in that zone.



A second dwelling or accessory dwelling on a lot falls under the specific use of an accessory dwelling or grouped dwelling, under the land use bylaw.

Some general considerations for all dwelling units are:

- Egress windows.
- Cooktop and counter clearances
- Exits
- Fire separations
- Distance from property lines and other buildings
- Adaptable housing requirements

## RESOURCES

There are multiple options available and how each applies depends on your individual circumstances. This handout is a general reference guide only. If you are considering your options speak to a Municipality of Cumberland Building Official and Development Officer to discuss what building code and land use bylaws apply to your situation.



**Land Use Bylaw (LUB)** is a large document that lays out the specific requirements for development in Cumberland. The LUB contains everything from setback distances to permitted uses and carries out the goals and visions of the *Municipal Planning Strategy*.

<https://www.plancumberland.ca/documents>



The **National Building Code of Canada (NBC) 2020**, developed by the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes and published by the National Research Council of Canada, sets out technical requirements for the design and construction of new buildings, as well as the alteration, change of use and demolition of existing buildings.

<https://doi.org/10.4224/w324-hv93>