

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CVRD amends zoning bylaws to permit suites in all Electoral Areas per Bill 44

DUNCAN, BC – The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) has amended zoning in eight of its nine Electoral Area zoning bylaws, in order to expand the ability of residents to have an attached suite in most zones that permit single detached dwellings.

These amendments, adopted on May 22, 2024, were required by the Province's Bill 44: *Housing Statutes (Residential Development) Amendment Act, 2023*. While many residential zones already permitted attached suites, the *Act* directed local governments in British Columbia to remove barriers to suite development, by:

- eliminating any minimum site (land) area requirements for an attached suite;
- eliminating owner occupancy of dwelling requirements, where those existed; and
- eliminating special regulations concerning the access to the suite.

The recently adopted CVRD zoning amendments comply with Bill 44 and should encourage more residents to create suites. These zoning changes imposed by Bill 44 do not require owners to build suites; it simply enables owners to build a suite if they wish to. Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay (Marine) Zoning Bylaw (No. 1015) requires Provincial approval and has not yet been adopted.

Other amendment bylaws that were not required by Bill 44 but increase access to detached suites (sometimes called coach houses or garden suites) have also been adopted for Electoral Areas B – Shawnigan Lake, Area D – Cowichan Bay Upland, Area F – Cowichan Bay South/Skutz Falls, and Area G - Saltair. These amendments will also permit detached suites on Agricultural Land Reserve land. It is expected that Electoral Areas A and C will have a similar bylaw amendment adopted before the end of June 2024.

“Housing is one of the most pressing issues facing our region, and this new legislation comes as a welcome tool to provide property owners in the Cowichan region greater flexibility to add a suite to their family home,” said Ian Morrison, Chair of the CVRD Electoral Area Services Committee. “Whether it’s to accommodate aging parents, adult children, or simply to generate additional income, adding rental units to our housing stock is direly needed and we hope this encourage residents to make an investment that helps solve the housing crisis we’re facing today.”

To learn more about the new provincial housing legislation and how it impacts the nine Electoral Areas of the CVRD, please visit: <https://www.planyourcowichan.ca/new-provincial-housing-legislation>

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