

Planning & Development Services Advisory

Backyard Suites

What is a Backyard Suite?

A backyard suite (also known as a laneway suite, garden suite, carriage house or granny flat) is a self-contained dwelling unit that is detached and ancillary to the principal dwelling unit. It can be located within or above a detached garage, or as a separate building (as long as the dwelling does not already contain a secondary suite). It provides the basic requirements for living, sleeping, cooking and sanitation.

Background:

As of June 29, 2022, City Council approved a zoning bylaw amendment to allow for the construction of backyard suites that are detached from the primary dwelling. Backyard suites are not considered secondary suites. A secondary suite is a self-contained floor area located within a principal dwelling unit. A backyard suite is a self-contained dwelling unit detached from the principal dwelling unit. Requirements exist for backyard suites depending on their design and construction.

All building code requirements outlined in the [Design Requirements](#) are intended to guide applicants to applicable parts of the code and indicate what exceptions may be provided, given the proposed design of the backyard suite, while ensuring the intent of the National Building Code (NBC) is met without posing undue risk to the occupants, primary dwelling or neighbouring properties.

Process:

A Backyard Suite application requires both a [development permit](#) and a [building permit application](#). These can be submitted separately or concurrently. The benefit of obtaining a development permit approval prior to a building permit is to ensure zoning compliance prior to investing in a full architectural set of drawings.

These applications can be submitted concurrently, but if submitted separately, the building permit will not be issued until the development permit has been approved. Both applications can be submitted through [eBuild](#), the City's online permit software.

Applications:

Complete and submit the [Backyard Suite](#) application package through eBuild. A backyard suite built within or above a detached garage or separate from a garage is submitted through a backyard suite application.

Pre-Application Meeting:

[Pre-application meetings](#) provide the opportunity for designers, project managers and building owners to meet with the City to discuss an upcoming project. The meeting is intended to support the development of productive working relationships and improve the quality of applications.

Discussion topics may include interpretation of code or bylaws, clarification of processes or other topics related to the preparation of an application.

Design Requirements:

The [Design Requirements](#) for Backyard Suites are available for guidance. A backyard suite is a more complex design than a detached garage or secondary suite. It is recommended to engage a professional designer or architect/engineer to ensure a complete package of documents and drawings are submitted through eBuild.

Servicing:

The City of Regina does not review the proposed servicing within the private property for a Backyard Suite. The property owner must work with their contractor and/or engineer to verify that the existing and/or proposed water and wastewater services have appropriate slope, sufficient frost protection and adequate size to service the proposed development on private property. This review is important because extending the existing building services may not meet the City of Regina [Design Standards](#) related to water and wastewater. The property owner can submit a request to locates@regina.ca to have their sewer/water service connection located/marked on the City side of their property.

When the site does not satisfy the City of Regina Design Standards, the property owner shall sign a [Water and Wastewater Services Acknowledgement](#) accepting all risks and liabilities, damages and/or costs resulting from the proposed Backyard Suite water and sanitary services, as part of the permit application submission.

When any changes are proposed to City infrastructure, a 3-Way Agreement is required. A 3-Way Agreement is a contract between the property owner, City of Regina and the contractor (from an approved City list) for infrastructure work in the road right-of-way, outlined in the agreement.

Incentives:

A five-year, 25% tax exemption is available for new [Backyard Suites](#) located in established areas within the City's intensification boundary (Program Areas 1, 2 and 3).

Units that receive this incentive must be used for long-term rental purposes for the duration of the tax exemption (i.e., not an Airbnb and not for commercial or personal use).

For more information on eligibility criteria and application requirements, please refer to the [Housing Incentives Policy](#).

For more information on Building Permits, Incentive Programs or Zoning Information, please visit Regina.ca or contact [Service Regina](#).