

# CHECKLIST FOR MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS

## How can governments support the uptake of these options?

Housing options like home sharing, secondary suites and coach (laneway) houses offer scalable solutions to pressing challenges like housing unaffordability, social isolation, high carbon emissions, a lack of housing options and a rapidly growing aging population. These options have benefits beyond offering additional housing units. They also offer social, economic and environmental benefits by addressing health for older adults, expanding capacity within the [housing continuum](#) and saving on building carbon emissions.

## CHECKLIST FOR MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS

The following are local government regulations that can affect whether the three types of housing options are feasible in a community. Consider reviewing, revising and incorporating changes in the following areas when updating zoning bylaws and Official Community Plans (OCP):<sup>1</sup>

### Check:

- **The number of boarders or lodgers** permitted in a single home or on a property.
- **Parking minimum requirements** for secondary suites and coach houses<sup>2</sup>
- Is a lot permitted to have **both a secondary suite and a coach house** on it?<sup>3</sup>
- What **minimum physical and design requirements** exist for coach houses?<sup>4</sup> Specifically:
  - Height restrictions
  - Space between buildings
  - Access to laneways
  - Floor space ratios
  - Minimum lot size requirements
- How are **floor space ratios calculated**? If structures like carports count towards this, it may reduce the number of coach house-eligible lots.

### Other measures to consider:

- **Streamline accessory dwelling unit permitting process**<sup>5</sup> and provide easy-to-follow guides for residents to understand requirements.
- **Enable stratification (strata-title)** of coach houses and accessory dwelling units<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As of spring 2024, new B.C. provincial legislature requires [OCP updates every 5 years](#).

<sup>2</sup> As of spring 2024, new B.C. legislation – Bill 44 – will remove parking restrictions in [small scale, multi-unit housing](#) zones.

<sup>3</sup> Restrictions for this may also be affected by Bill 44.

<sup>4</sup> Fewer restrictions can potentially increase uptake.

<sup>5</sup> Some initiatives are exploring what streamlined approvals could look like, see the [Renovate the Public Hearing Initiative](#) and the [Balanced Housing Lab](#) with the [City of North Vancouver](#).

<sup>6</sup> So that housing costs and equity can be shared among multiple households. See [policy recommendations from Small Housing BC](#).

- **Offer pre-approved designs of coach houses** to reduce municipal approvals times.<sup>7</sup>
- **Promote universal accessibility, energy efficient construction and retrofits** for home sharing or additional dwellings, so that climate resilience, value, building longevity and access for all ages and abilities are maximized in new housing units being created.
- **Promote neighbourhood connection and sociability** to encourage connectedness of residents through the design of public spaces, informal and formal neighbourhood programs and creating spaces for people to interact.<sup>8</sup>
- **Collect data on short-term rentals** (for example for Air BnB) and assess their impact on local rental stock. Review the effects of recent [B.C. legislation on short-term rentals](#) to assess if additional regulation is needed.
- **Offer funding** to incentivize these housing options and low carbon building practices like retrofits or installing heat pumps.<sup>9</sup>

## More resources:

- For more details about these recommendations, [see the full report](#)
- BC Housing [report on Accessory Dwelling Units](#)
- Climate Caucus' [Buildings handbook](#)
- [Housing Solutions Lab archive site](#) and [webpage](#)

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<sup>7</sup> Both the B.C. provincial and federal governments are working on [preapproved building designs](#), as of January 2024. Other examples of cities who have implemented this include Los Angeles, Seattle and Kalamazoo.

<sup>8</sup> See [policy recommendations from the Hey Neighbour Collective](#).

<sup>9</sup> See [City of Edmonton Cornerstones grant](#), [B.C. Secondary Suites Initiative](#).