

HALIFAX

Accessibility Guidelines for Secondary & Backyard Suites

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Origin

- [September 1, 2020](#) – Region-wide amendments to allow secondary and backyard suites
- [September 30, 2020](#) – supplementary motion:

THAT Halifax Regional Council request a staff report that:

1. recommends approaches to ensure accessibility to secondary and backyard suites from streets or driveways; and
2. discusses how the Municipality will monitor secondary and backyard suites to determine if further amendments to community land use by-laws should be considered.

Approach

- Accessibility & Housing
- Provincial Building Code Requirements
- Jurisdictional Scan
- Existing Requirement
- Proposed Guidelines



Building Code Regulations

- Requirement threshold of 4+ units
- Adaptable housing requirements
 - Minimum door and corridor
 - Lower switches
 - Higher outlets
 - Grab bars

3.8.4.2 - 3)

“The entrance door to a building described in Clause 3.8.2.1.(1)(a) or (b) shall be easily accessed and be capable of being made barrier-free from a sidewalk or parking area.”



Jurisdictional Scan

10 Canadian Municipalities

Common Features

- Unobstructed access of a specified width
- Comprehensive guidelines with accessibility considerations

Uncommon Features

- Hard-surfaced paths
- Exclusive requirement for unobstructed access in guidelines instead of by-law

Existing Requirements

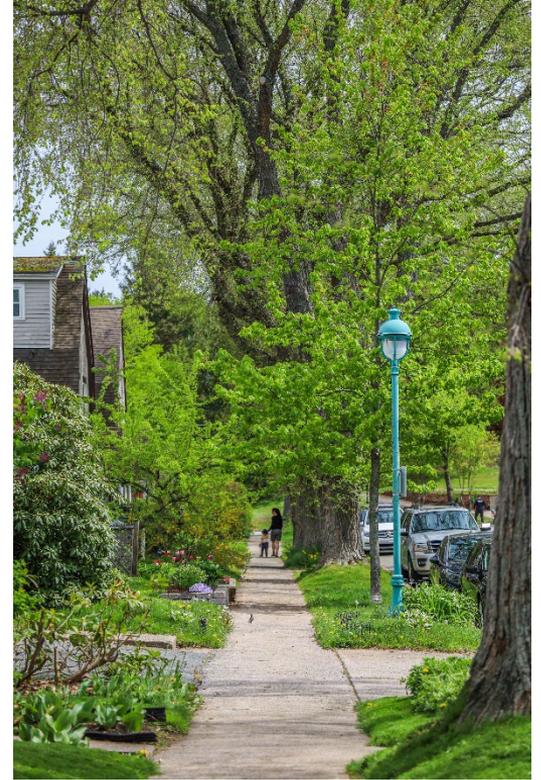
“where the main dwelling unit does not have a side yard on both sides, a backyard suite must have unobstructed access upon the same lot in which the backyard suite is located to a public street.”



Recommendation

Accessibility Guidelines for Secondary and Backyard Suites

- No one-size fits all approach
- Unique properties
- Opportunity for more extensive universal design considerations



Proposed Guidelines

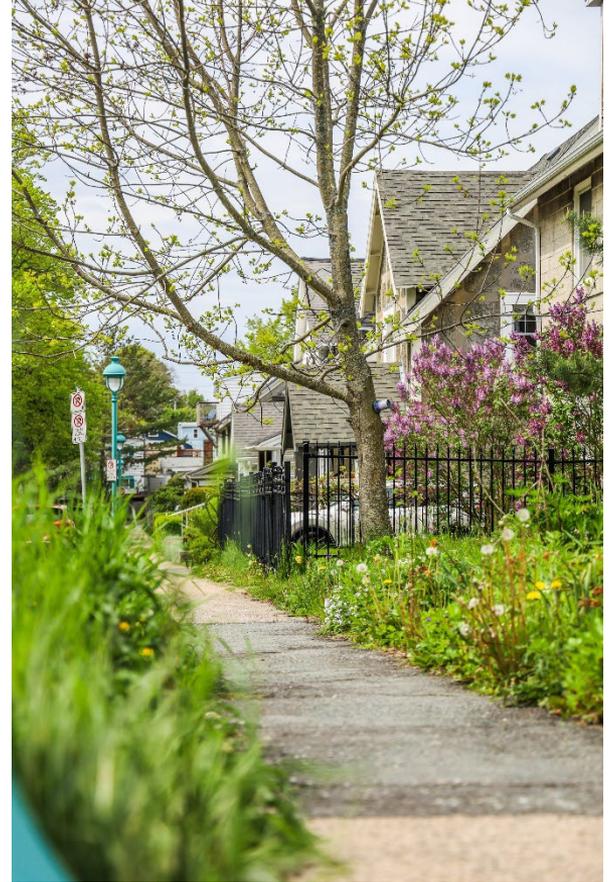
Accessibility Guidelines for Secondary and Backyard Suites

- Strength of guidelines combined with Building Code Requirements and existing language
- Adapted from Rick Hansen Universal Design Recommendations, based on Canadian Standards Association (CSA) B651-18 Accessible Design for the Built Environment Standards
- More exhaustive list of universal design considerations
- Most comprehensive set of accessibility guidelines among jurisdictions
- Included with permit application information and shared broadly with the public

Proposed Guidelines

Accessibility Guidelines for Secondary and Backyard Suites

- Entrances & Doors
- Ramps
- Parking
- Passenger Drop-off and Pick-up Zones



Questions

- Do you have any feedback regarding the attached Accessibility Guidelines or the proposed approach as a whole?
- Are there any strategies you would recommend we consider in distributing and sharing these guidelines?
- Do you have further comments or experience regarding secondary and backyard suites, or housing issues generally?

Thank You

Guidelines

Entrances & Doors

Approach to Entrance

- Distinguish entrances to the suite from the rest of the building with colour or architectural element.
- Ensure pedestrian pathways to the main entrance is accessible from parking, passenger drop-off or other arrival points.
- Pathway surface should be firm, stable, and slip resistant.
- Consider tactile direction indicators where approaches to building entrances include large open areas.
- Ensure the primary entrance of the suite is accessible if multiple entrances are provided.
- Include clearly visible civic address or signage for approach to suite or site.
- Ensure there is a level landing at the entrance to the suite for people to wait, enter, and exit.
- Mount any included entrance operating mechanisms no higher than 1100 mm above the finished floor level with clear space in front of them.
- Ensure entrances are well-illuminated for safety after dark.

Entrance Door

- Clear opening door width should be no less than 850 mm for existing buildings and 1000 mm for new buildings.
- Wherever possible, the threshold should be flush with the external ground surface and internal floor finish.

Guidelines

Ramps

- Slope should not exceed 1:20 (5%).
- Ramp surface should be firm, stable, and slip resistant.
- Level landings at the top and bottom of ramp, and at intermediate location(s) if ramp changes direction or is longer than 9 metres.
- Colour-contrasted and slip resistant strips at landings that extend the full width of the ramp to signal slope change.
- A curb or raised wall should protect users from ramp edges.
- Easy to grasp handrails should be installed on both sides of ramp with horizontal extensions at the bottom and top of the ramp to assist persons on and off the ramp.
- Ramps and landings should be well-illuminated.

Parking

- Parking spaces provided should be at least 3.6 metres wide and include a curb, wheel stop or painted line to ensure a 0.90 metre pathway in front the vehicle.
- Ensure accessible parking spaces can be easily identified by providing directional signage to and vertical signage at the accessible parking space.
- Ensure the path of travel between the accessible parking spaces and the building entrance is safe and kept clear at all times.

Passenger Drop-off and Pick-up Zones

- Provide clearly designated passenger drop-off and pick-up zones for site users, by marking space with paint and installing signage. A dedicated curb ramp should be provided, if there is a level change.
- Provide seating and shelter at passenger drop-off/pick-up zones. Seating and shelter are important for seniors, people with mobility or vision disabilities as they often need a comfortable and weather protected place to wait.