

ADDITIONAL DWELLING UNITS

Planning & Development | Town of High River

This information sheet provides basic information on applying for an additional dwelling unit(s). The information is a simplification of the Town's [Land Use Bylaw](#). In the event of any discrepancy/omission, the Land Use Bylaw takes precedence.

The process for applying for an additional dwelling unit(s) (previously known as “secondary suites”) has changed in the Town's new land use bylaw. The new process is easier, more time efficient, and there is **no need for a rezoning** which results in cost savings as well.

Pre-application meetings are **required** for Additional Dwelling Unit applications. If you would like to book a pre-application meeting or would like to speak with the Planning & Development Services Division before submitting your application, please contact us at planning@highriver.ca or at 403.652.2110 and we would be pleased to assist you.

Staff reserve the discretion to require a pre-application meeting if staff believe that the complexity of the application warrants it.

Applicants must fill in the **Minor Development Permit** application form (found at highriver.ca/development-permits) and submit all requirements (unless otherwise discussed with staff). **The Town does NOT accept incomplete applications.**

If any part of the application does not comply with the [Land Use Bylaw](#) (at the Town's discretion), you will be required to either revise the application or apply for a variance application (found at highriver.ca/development-permits) which costs \$175 as per the [Rate Bylaw](#).

Definition of “Dwelling Unit”

- Dwelling Unit means a single unit providing complete, independent living facilities, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation. Dwelling Units shall be serviced by connection to the Town's sewer and water lines.
- Your additional dwelling unit could be a unit in the existing house's basement, a unit in an extension/addition onto your house, or a separate unit (i.e. a “tiny house”).

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Do I need a development permit for my additional dwelling unit?

- You need a Permitted Use Development Permit if your property is located in TND (*Traditional Neighbourhood District*), NCD (*Neighbourhood Commercial District*), or CBD (*Central Business District*). See [Land Use Bylaw map](#). A Permitted Use Development Permit is only circulated to internal Town departments. This type of development permit does not include a public appeal period.
- You need a Discretionary Use Development Permit if your property is located in the URD (*Urban Reserve District*), or in the SED (*Service & Employment District*) See [Land Use Bylaw map](#)). This type of development permit does include a public appeal period (21 days after the Town issues its decision on the application).

How many dwelling units may I have on my property?

- There are no specific limits on the number of dwelling units you may have on your property.
- Your development proposal must comply with the regulations of the [Land Use Bylaw](#) (e.g. setbacks, lot coverage), as well as being able to meet the Town's [General Engineering and Construction Specifications](#), any servicing requirements (i.e. servicing connections might need upgrades and developer would be responsible for costs), and the requirements of the current Alberta Building Code (see [checklist for secondary suite](#)).

Are there parking minimums?

- There is no minimum motor vehicle parking required.
- If you have 4 or more residential units, you must provide bicycle parking as per the [Land Use Bylaw](#).

What does the Town look for during the review process?

- The Town's Land Use Bylaw includes two guiding principles. These guiding principles are very critical and the Town will use them to evaluate the suitability of your application.

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Guiding Principles for evaluating applications

The Town's Land Use Bylaw includes two guiding principles. These guiding principles are very critical and the Town will use them to evaluate the suitability of your application.

A Pedestrian as the Universal Measure of Design:

- The Town of High River is to be designed based on a scale that is comfortable to people, encourages walking, accommodates a variety of functions, can change and adapt over time, and that will foster an environment that supports and reinforces the social aspects of the Town.

Stewardship through Sustainable Design:

- The Town, the community, and the development industry act as stewards for the High River of tomorrow. All development shall focus on long term quality over short term gains.

- The Town also reviews the application to ensure that it complies with all of the Land Use Bylaw regulations as well as the policies in the Town Plan and in any other applicable policy documents (Area Structure Plans, Area Redevelopment Plans, Neighbourhood Outline Plans, etc. found here).
 - If there are aspects of your proposal that do not comply with the Town's regulations/policies, staff will go through options with you. Options could include applying for a variance or applying to amend the applicable policy document
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The development permit process

The approximate timeline to issue a **Permitted Use** Development Permit is 2 weeks and the approximate timeline to issue a **Discretionary Use** Development Permit is 5 weeks (from acceptance of application to end of appeal period).

PRE-APPLICATION

- Pre-application meetings are **required** for additional dwelling unit applications.
- Pre-application meetings are an opportunity to discuss the application with representatives from all relevant departments. They are an effective and efficient way to catch any “red flags” and generally result in a more efficient application processing time. We will also go through the Town’s Guiding Principles (noted above) with respect to your application.
- Please contact staff at 403.652.2110 or at planning@highriver.ca to book a pre-application meeting/discuss your proposal. Please give us 2-3 business days to set up the meeting.
- We will also go through the Town’s Guiding Principles (noted on the previous page) with respect to your application.

APPLICATION

- Application Fee: \$150 per dwelling unit applied for (as per [Rate Bylaw](#))
- Minor Development Permit application form must be submitted with all required documentation. Staff will review the requirements with you at the pre-application meeting.

APPLICATION COMPLETENESS MEETING

- Please contact your file manager from your pre-application meeting and let them know that you are ready to apply. They will set up a meeting with you to review the application before it is accepted to ensure no required elements are missing as the Town does not accept incomplete applications.
- If you did not have a pre-application, please contact us at planning@highriver.ca or at 403.652.2110 to set up an application completeness meeting for you.

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TOWN REVIEW

- Planning staff circulate to internal departments for their comments. They are given 1 to 2 weeks to provide comments at the discretion of Planning & Development staff based on the complexity of the application.
- You can see the progress being made on your application [here](#). This webpage shows the progress of all current applications and is updated every week
- You will be provided with the comments received through a formally compiled letter after the circulation period is complete. If revisions are required, you will need to resubmit applicable drawings in the same size and format as you submitted them in your original application.
- These comments may become conditions of your permit.
- You will have the opportunity to review these conditions and let the Town know if you have any comments or concerns before the Town issues the decision/permit.
- These comments may include requests for revisions.

TOWN DECISION

- After receiving satisfactory revisions (if applicable), the Town issues its decision on the application, known as the “Notice of Decision” (support with conditions or refusal with reasons).
- If you disagree with the Town’s decision, you have the opportunity to file an appeal (see “Appeals by Applicant”) within 21 days from the date the Notice of Decision was issued.

PUBLIC REVIEW

- If the use is **permitted** (in TND, NCD, and CBD), there is no opportunity for public appeal.
- If the use is **discretionary** (in URD or SED) and the Town supports the application, the Town posts a notice on the property to notify the public of the application, the Town’s decision, and conditions (if applicable) for 21 days.
- Any member of the public can appeal a decision on a **discretionary** use (see “Appeals by Public”).

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ISSUANCE (IF NO APPEAL)

- If there are no public appeals (in the case of a discretionary use application), the Town issues you the Development Permit.

APPEALS (BY APPLICANT)

- You can appeal the Town's decision on your application by submitting the [Notice of Appeal](#) through the Legislative Services Department via legislativeservices@highriver.ca. You must submit your appeal application within 21 days of the date that the Notice of Decision was issued.
- The appeal fee is \$300 (as per [Rate Bylaw](#))

APPEALS (BY PUBLIC)

- The public can appeal the decision on a **discretionary** use by submitting the [Notice of Appeal](#) through the Legislative Services Department via legislativeservices@highriver.ca. The public appeal must be submitted within 21 days of the Notice of Decision.
- The appeal fee is \$300 (as per [Rate Bylaw](#))
- The hearing will take place within 30 days of the appeal being filed. You will be notified in writing of the hearing date at least 5 days prior to the hearing date.