



# Housing Policy Options

## Phase 2 of Community Engagement is Here – Let’s Keep Talking about Housing!

Following direction from Council on October 6, 2025, the District has launched Phase 2 of the 2025 Housing Update Project. This phase is informed by feedback from Phase 1 community engagement, Provincial housing legislation requirements, and recent Council direction on October 6, 2025, to explore housing policy options 1 through 5. A summary of housing policy options was presented to Council and is available in the [October 6 2025 Council Meeting Agenda](#).

### What’s Happening Now?

Council has directed staff to engage the community and stakeholders on five draft housing policy directions, before any bylaw changes are prepared.

### Why These Policy Directions?

The proposed housing policy options aim to align with Provincial legislation and respond to the seven classes of housing need identified in Metchosin’s Housing Needs Report. These solutions are designed to support a wider range of housing needs while respecting the rural context and Metchosin values.

### What’s Next?

We want to hear from you! Please have a look at the **five housing policy options** and share your feedback on each one. Please share the following in your comments back.

- **Do you support or not support a specific option?**
- **If you support it, are there specific regulations or conditions you would like to see?**

## 1. Align Housing with Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) Use Regulation

For land within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), the Province now allows up to three residential units per parcel:

- **1 principal dwelling** (up to 500 m<sup>2</sup> floor area)
- **1 secondary suite** (within that principal dwelling, contained within the 500 m<sup>2</sup> floor area)
- **1 additional residence** (up to 90 m<sup>2</sup> on parcels less than 40 ha or 186 m<sup>2</sup> on parcels greater than 40 ha)

Additional residences no longer need to be used solely for farm workers, they may be for family, renters, seniors, or others. **Note:** Local Governments can apply more restrictive rules, but not more permissive ones.

### **Policy Idea #1: Permit 1 Principal Dwelling + 1 Secondary Suite + 1 Detached Additional Residence**

- This brings Metchosin in line with the Provincial ALR regulations
- Additional detached residence would be in the form of a carriage house or detached secondary suite.
- It could support aging in place, increase rental opportunities, and provide more farm worker/worker accommodation options
- The Land Use Bylaw currently requires additional detached residences to be within 15 m of the principal dwelling (section 23(10)) – this requirement will remain to cluster housing, protect rural and agricultural character, and minimize environmental impacts.

**Implementation** would require amendments to policies 3.3.11 and 3.3.12 in Part 3 – Agriculture of the OCP. Additionally, OCP policy 3.3.11 and land use bylaw (LUB) section 51(3)(b) needs amending to be consistent with the ALR Use Regulation.

## **2. Use of Temporary Use Permit (TUPs) for Farm Worker Housing**

### **Current Issue:**

Zoning currently permits only one principal and one accessory dwelling. Any additional dwelling, such as for seasonal farm workers, requires rezoning and an OCP amendment, which is a barrier for working farms.

### **Policy Idea #2: Support TUPs for Temporary Farm Worker Housing**

- Consider TUPs for farm worker housing on both ALR land and Non-ALR land.
- TUPs provide flexibility to support active farms without increasing permanent residential density.
- Applications for a temporary dwelling would be evaluated case by case, with appropriate conditions (such as location, clustering, protection of environment),

**OCP example policy:** *Consider the use of Temporary Use Permits to support temporary on-farm worker housing where it supports active agriculture and aligns with Metchosin's rural and environmental values.*

### **How This Connects to Policy Idea #1**

If Policy Idea #1 is implemented – aligning housing with ALR Use Regulation – then three dwellings (a principal dwelling, a secondary suite, and one detached additional residence) would be permitted by default on ALR land. In that case, a TUP on ALR land would be used to request a fourth residential unit for farm worker housing. This would require a Temporary Use Permit from the District and a Non-Adhering Residential Use (NARU) application to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) for approval.

**Implementation:** include an enabling policy in the OCP in Part 3 – Agriculture to allow Council to consider TUPS for Farm worker housing in the future. Details such as location, design requirements and the application and review process can be developed later, through further public and stakeholder engagement, and as part of the implementation work.

### 3. Expand Housing Diversity

#### **Policy Idea #3: Permit More Housing Types**

Introduce carriage houses, tiny homes (on foundation only) and communal seniors housing (Abbeyfield Dwelling) as options to help meet a wider range of housing needs for seniors, young families, caregivers, adult children, students, etc.

##### **Carriage Houses**

- An accessory dwelling that is combined with a detached accessory building, typically on the upper floor.
- Support housing diversity for rental, aging in place, multigenerational living, families, caregivers, students, etc.
- allowing carriage houses may make more units eligible to be brought into the formal rental market, increasing available rental stock.
- Setbacks requirements and minimum lot size of 0.8 ha are proposed to be the same as currently required for a detached secondary suite.

##### **Communal Seniors Housing (Abbeyfield Dwelling)**

- A dwelling unit that is (1) operated by a non-profit society or co-operative association, (2) where up to ten elderly people and one live-in caretaker live together as a co-operative household, (3) where each resident has a private bedroom and shares common facilities such as kitchens, dining rooms, and living space, (4) light services such as meals, housekeeping, and social programming may be provided, but no personal or medical care is offered. These housing forms are not licensed under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and are considered supportive but independent housing.
- Consider allowing in all zones, except not permitted on parcels within the ALR. The parcel is to be serviced by CRD water.
- offers shared living for independent seniors, supports aging in place, allows options for downsizing. Small-scale models can be designed to fit rural character

##### **Tiny Homes (on foundations only)**

- permanently affixed tiny homes may qualify as detached secondary suites because there is no minimum dwelling size in the Land Use Bylaw
- Must comply with zoning (e.g., setbacks, floor area) and BC Building Code.

**Implementation:** would require amendments to Part 6 – Residential section of the OCP and amendments to the Land Use Bylaw.

## 4. Increase Size Flexibility for Accessory Dwelling Units

### Policy Idea #4: Increase Permitted Floor Areas

#### a) Detached Secondary Suites/Carriage Houses

- Increase maximum size to 90 m<sup>2</sup>
- Enables more functional 2-bedroom family or rental units (a key need identified in the Housing Needs Report)
- Improves accessibility and aging in place options (a key need identified in the Housing Needs Report)
- Having a more flexible size limit could remove barriers that would prevent a homeowner from legalizing or building suites. As a result, more units may be eligible to be brought into the formal rental market, increasing available rental stock.

#### b) Secondary Suites (inside principal dwelling)

- Increase maximum size to 120 m<sup>2</sup>
- Allows for 3-bedroom suites (a need identified in the Housing Needs Report)
- Supports multigenerational families, individuals with disabilities, families and long-term rentals. More space allows for features like wider hallways, accessible bathrooms, elevator, or additional bedrooms.
- Aligns with BC Building Code 2018, which no longer restricts suite size or percentage of house area

**Implementation:** would require amendments to the Land Use Bylaw.

## 5. Provide Education and Guidance for Legalizing Existing Suites

### Current Issue:

There are likely unpermitted suites already in use. Homeowners may be willing to legalize if clear guidelines and support are in place.

### Policy Idea #5: Provide Education and Guidance for Legalizing Existing Suites

- Take a proactive, supportive approach by including a policy in the OCP to support voluntary legalization through education, guidance and potential incentives.
- Provide clear information on zoning rules, BC Building Code requirements, permit processes.
- Focus on encouraging safety and compliance, not just enforcement.
- The goal is to improve safety, rental availability, and housing affordability by making the process of legalizing suites clearer and more accessible.

### Example OCP policies to achieve this – three different variations:

- *Option A - Encourage the voluntary legalization of existing secondary suites and detached accessory dwellings by offering clear guidance to property owners, promoting compliance with health and safety requirements, and simplifying the permitting process when possible*

- *Option B - Support the voluntary legalization of existing secondary suites and detached accessory dwellings by providing clear guidance to property owners, encouraging compliance with health and safety standards, and streamlining the permitting process where appropriate*
- *Option C - Support homeowners in voluntarily bringing suites into compliance by providing clear educational materials, guidance on applicable zoning and building requirements, and streamlining the permitted process where appropriate.*

**Implementation:** would require including a policy in Part 6 – Residential section of the OCP. This policy would give policy backing for staff to spend time and resources on education materials. It shows Council's intent to support voluntary compliance, rather than focus solely on enforcement.