



# Garden Suites Survey Results

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PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE JULY 12, 2022

[visit-gibsons.ca](http://visit-gibsons.ca)



# Purpose

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1. To share with Council the results of 2021 Garden Suites Program stakeholder surveys
2. To prioritize Garden Suites policy updates reflecting the community feedback in 2023 budget considerations

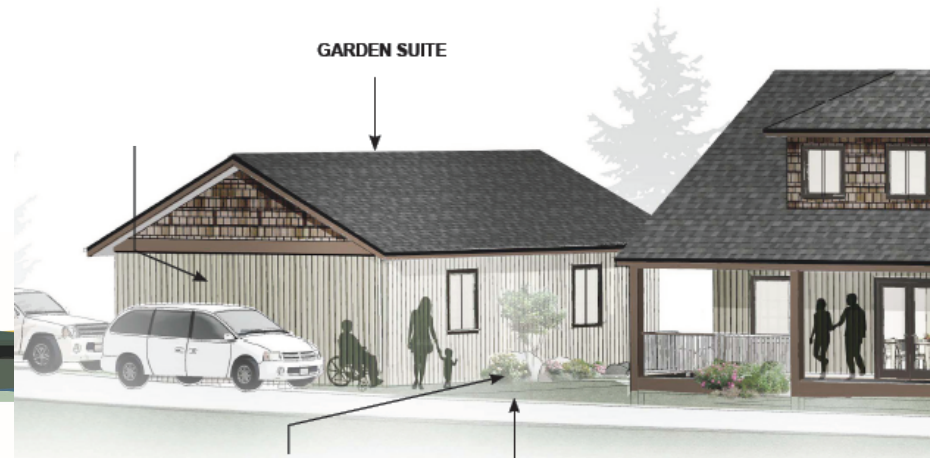


# What is a Garden Suite?

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## Definition:

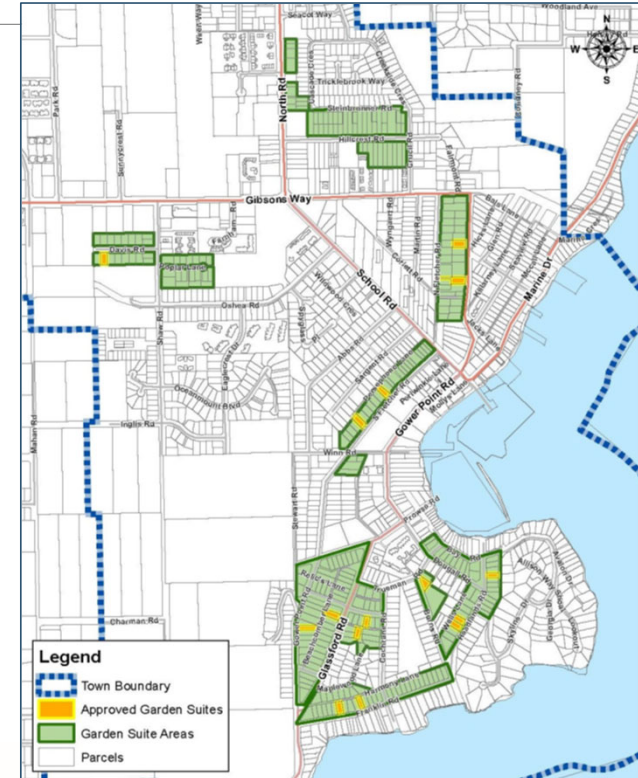
“Garden Suite” means a detached dwelling unit located on the same lot as a principal building.





# Background

1. Garden Suites introduced in Gibsons 2015 OCP update
2. Rigorous regulation approach selected at outset (DP, limited garden suites areas)
3. Review of program to be undertaken after 10 Garden Suites or 5 years
4. 2020 - 2021 (12-15 suites approved): Stakeholder surveys completed.





# Program Objectives

## Anticipated Benefits of Garden Suites (2015):

- Gentle increase in density
- Choice in the housing market
- Purpose built rental housing
- Using existing infrastructure
- Aging in place
- Housing affordability
- Improve character and 'streetscape' of lanes
- Lower greenhouse gas intensity of building stock
- More walkable neighbourhoods





# Target Stakeholder Feedback

<b>Owners of Garden Suites</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Motivation for developing a Garden Suite</li> <li>➤ Use of the garden suite and other units on the property.</li> <li>➤ Parking use and needs</li> <li>➤ Experience with current guidelines and regulations</li> <li>➤ Experience with neighbour relationships</li> <li>➤ Cost and ease of the development process</li> </ul>		<b>Survey 1</b>
<b>Residents of Garden Suites Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Awareness of the Garden Suites Program</li> <li>➤ Reasons for choosing to build or not build a garden suite (program participation)</li> </ul>		
<b>Neighbours of Garden Suites</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Neighbourhood fit of suites built under current regulations (or with variances)</li> <li>➤ Impacts of garden suite development for direct neighbours and opportunities to mitigate them.</li> </ul>		<b>Survey 2</b>
<b>Residents not in the Garden Suites Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Interest in expansion of the Garden Suites Areas to their neighbourhood</li> </ul>		
<b>All Gibsons Residents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Priorities for regulating design, siting and use of garden suites if areas are expanded.</li> <li>➤ Feedback on options for regulating building massing, enclosed parking</li> </ul>		<b>Survey 2</b>
<b>Persons in need of housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Housing objectives not adequately addressed by survey</li> </ul>		



# Methods & Response

<b>Survey of Garden Suite Owners</b> (February 7 – 18, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• email to owners of existing garden suites with survey link</li><li>• follow-up phone call</li></ul>	14 surveys completed of 15 garden suite properties
<b>Survey of Garden Suite Neighbours and Gibsons Residents</b> (April 21- May 10, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open online survey</li><li>• Ads in the Coast Reporter, Town Newsletter and social media</li><li>• Letter mail to immediate neighbours of garden suites</li><li>• Questions targeted to specific stakeholder groups</li></ul>	175 surveys completed; 78 close or immediate neighbours of garden suites

# Survey Feedback

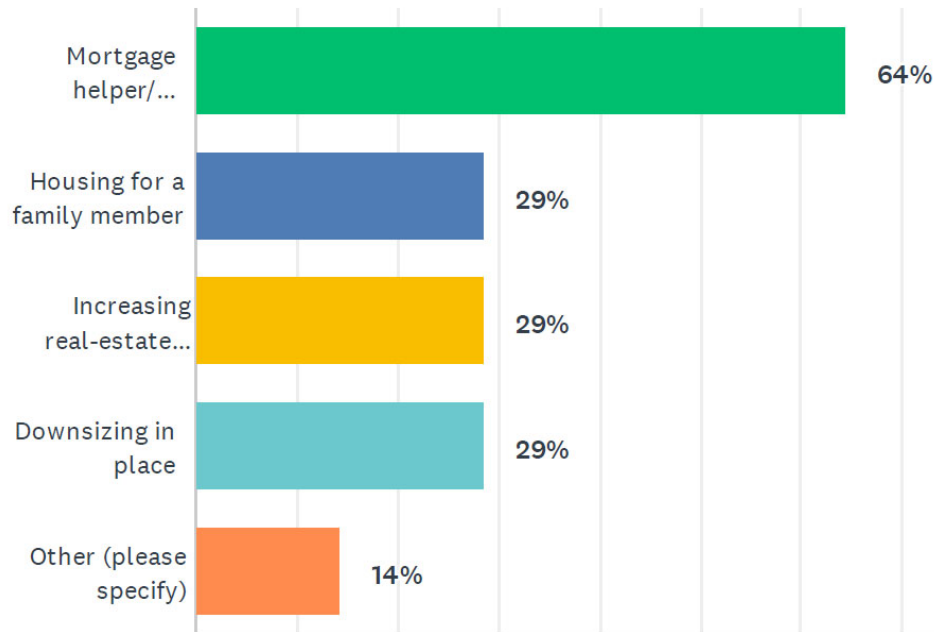




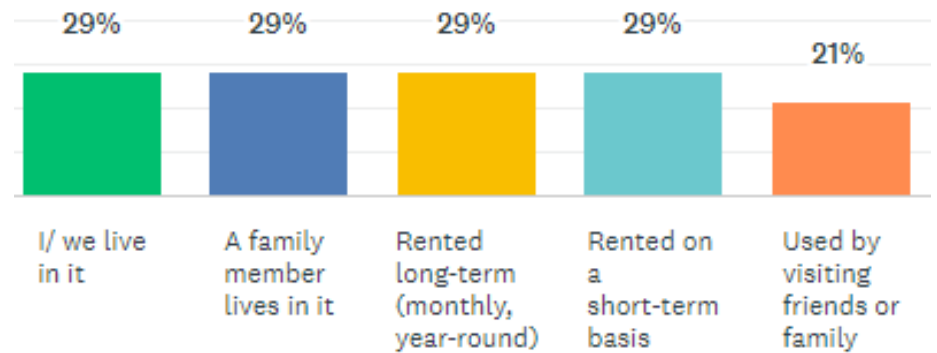


# Use of property

Q1 What was your motivation to develop a Garden Suite?



How is the Garden Suite used?

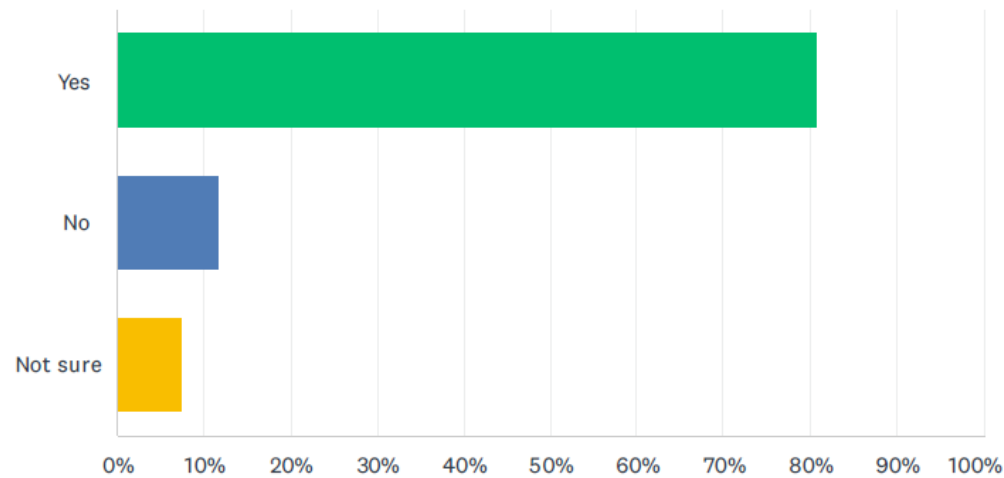




# Garden Suites Areas Expansion

Q15 With appropriate design considerations, do you think that Garden Suites could fit well within your neighbourhood?

Answered: 94 Skipped: 81

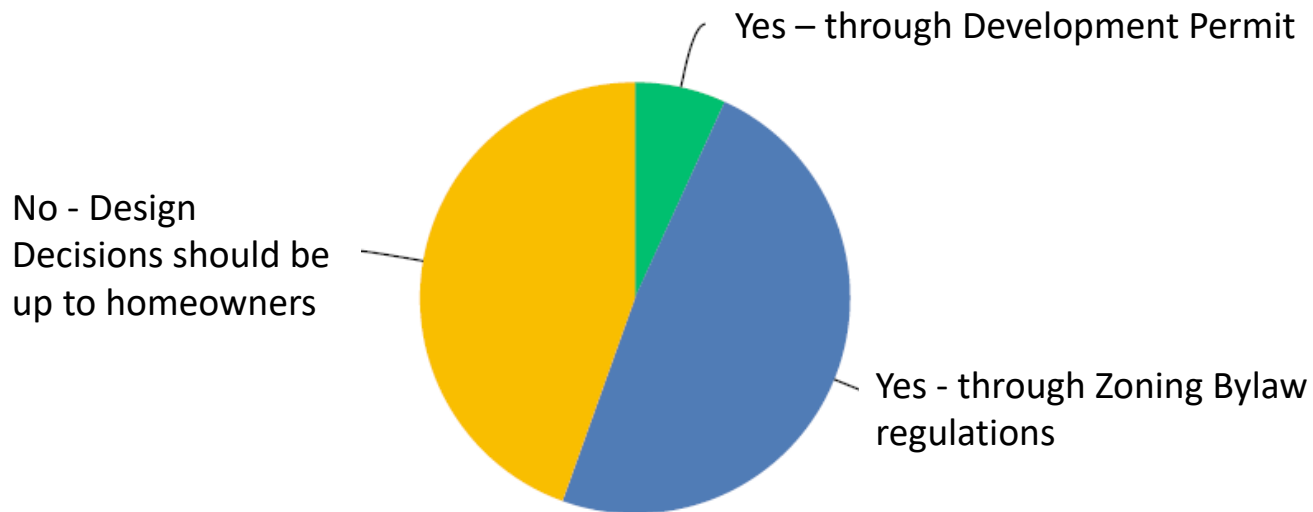




# Form and Character Regulation

**Do you think the Town should regulate and review how garden suites look, in terms of style, materials, and landscaping?**

Answered: 146 Skipped: 29





# Top Policy Priorities for GS Expansion

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The most important policy considerations identified by residents for ensuring good fit in neighbourhoods are:

1. Ensuring that the suite is used for family or long-term rentals only (71% important or very important/ 14% not important)
2. Minimizing overlook onto neighbouring yards (64% important or very important vs. 8% not important)



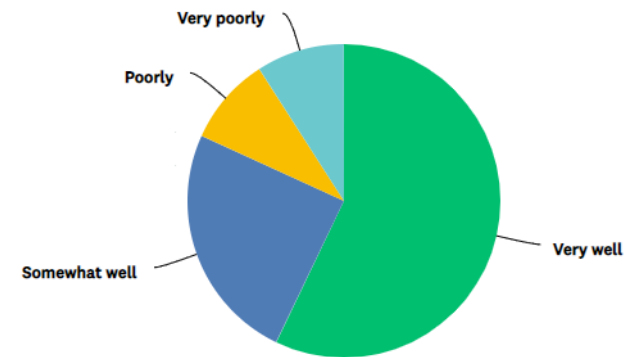
# Neighbour Priorities

Neighbour experiences of garden suites vary based on how close they are to a suite.

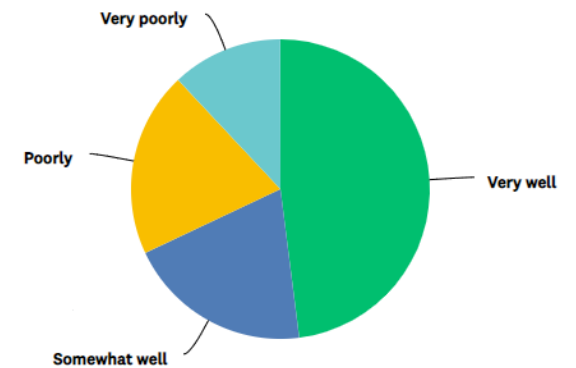
The most frequent considerations identified by garden suite neighbours for improving neighbourhood fit of garden suites are:

- A. Smaller height
- B. Better privacy
- C. Improved landscaping
- D. Appropriate parking

## Experience of Neighbourhood Fit:



## Neighbours within a block



## Close neighbours



# Height & Massing

Only 1/4 of respondents were comfortable with garden suites having a full second storey, with most preferring reduced upper storey massing (40%) or restriction to single storey height (34%).

26%

A. Full sized second storey:



40%

B. Upper storey massing reduced:



34%

C. Single storey height:





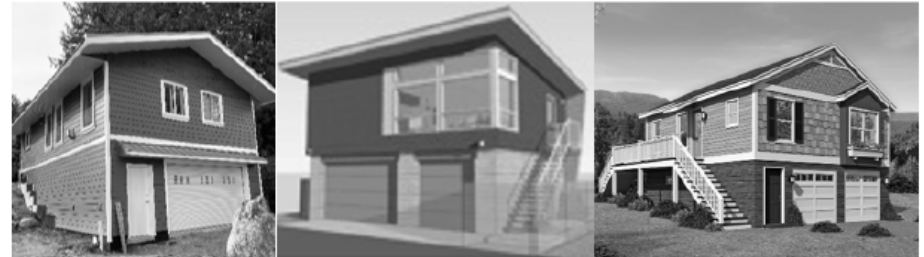
# Enclosed Parking 29%

Fewer than 1/3 of respondents support above-garage suites or enclosed parking garages within garden suites

29%

41%

**Option A** – Allow above-garage suites (carriage houses).



**Pros:** More efficient use of land; flexibility of design; combines suite and covered parking  
**Cons:** Larger building form; raised living space increases overlook.

**Option B** – Increase Garden Suite floor area to allow indoor space for a single vehicle.



**Pros:** Combines enclosed parking with suite; limited increase to building size.  
**Cons:** Some increase to building size; more upper storey living space increases overlook.

**Option C** – No garages in garden suites.



**Pros:** Smaller building; main floor living space means less overlook on neighbours  
**Cons:** No covered parking for Garden Suite; a separate garage building for the principal dwelling may increase building footprint on lot.



# Recommended policy directions

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1. Expand the garden suites areas as outlined in the Discussion section of the report;
2. replacing the Form and Character Development Permit (DP) requirement for Garden Suites with regulations in Zoning Bylaw 1065
3. Refine regulations to improve neighbourhood fit as prioritized in the survey feedback.
4. Review development and utility fees to improve and balance incentives for infill development.
5. Address infrastructure implications of garden suite development on lanes (e.g. garbage collection, stormwater management, utility connections, mapping locations for onstreet parking)





# Next Steps

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Next steps may include one or both of:

- A. Drafting comprehensive garden suites policy update including form-based bylaw regulations. (Consultant budget required)
- B. Phased updates to garden suites policy as time and staffing permit

\*further public consultation part of bylaw update process





# Recommendations

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1. **THAT** the report titled Garden Suites Program Review – 2021 Survey Results be received for information;
2. **AND THAT** Garden Suites policy updates reflecting the community feedback be prioritized in budget considerations for 2023.

**Alternatively**, Staff may change or choose not to recommend a budget timeline for updates to garden suites policy.