



Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



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Director

LIVING SUITES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a “living suite”?

A living suite is a portion of a residence that includes a living room, a kitchen, a bathroom, and one or more bedrooms. A living suite includes an interior connection – typically a door – to the remainder of the residence and may also have a separate exterior entrance.

Why are living suites suddenly an issue?

On September 29, 2015, the County Board of Supervisors approved an ordinance allowing living suites throughout the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. Residents of Rowland Heights raised concerns at the Board meeting that living suites may not be appropriate for their community as they could be potentially inconsistent with the character of their community.

Where specifically are living suites allowed?

The ordinance approved by the Board of Supervisors on September 29, 2015, allows living suites only in the Residential Planned Development (RPD) Zone with a conditional use permit (CUP). The CUP process requires discretionary review, which includes a public hearing, and conditions are typically imposed to ensure that such units are consistent with community character and have sufficient services and infrastructure. The Living Suites Ordinance states that a living suite can be provided only for new development in the RPD Zone, in any single-family residence, duplex, multi-family residence, or manufactured home.

Can my neighbor add a living suite to his house?

No. The ordinance approved by the Board of Supervisors allows living suites only in new development, within the RPD Zone. Living suites are not allowed in Residential, Commercial, or Agricultural Zones, and cannot be added to an existing single-family residence.

What is the difference between a second unit and a living suite?

Living suites and second units are different housing products. A second unit is a completely separate residence with a separate electrical meter that is typically rented out to a separate household. A living suite is not a separate residence, as it maintains an interior connection to the remainder of the residence, does not have a separate electrical meter, and is not intended to be rented out to a separate household.

What happens if someone converts a portion of their house into a living suite?

The property owner would need either to remove the kitchen for the living suite, or apply to Regional Planning for and obtain approval of a second unit.

To submit comments concerning living suites in Rowland Heights, please call Gina Natoli at 213-974-3426 or e-mail your comments to gnatoli@planning.lacounty.gov.