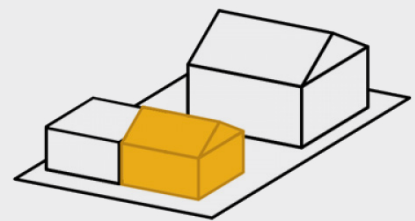


WCS engagement
+ planning



Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) and Missing Middle Housing

Practices and Recommendations

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This resource was developed through the generous support of:



Introduction

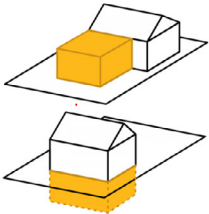
This document provides practices and examples from municipalities across BC for implementation of Accessory Dwelling Units and missing middle housing in residential areas, and is intended to support the initiatives being proposed by the Province of BC, who recently released their **Homes for People** action plan. Homes for People includes legislation to be introduced in 2023 that will allow secondary suites in every community in the province, and up to four (or three, depending on size of lot) units on a traditional single-family detached lot, with additional density permitted in areas well-served by transit. This document also provides a number of recommendations around zoning and process learned from the practices reviewed.

Accessory Dwelling Units

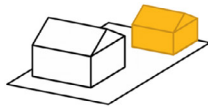
The term Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) refers to all forms of additional units on residential (or even commercial/industrial) properties and may be either attached (internal) to the primary residence or detached (external) from the primary residence. An ADU is an independent living space, self-contained with its own kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping area.

ADUs include secondary suites, on-lot tiny homes, garden suites, duplex or townhouse lock-off suites, laneway/garage units and any other dwelling unit type that can be placed in or adjacent to an existing or new dwelling unit on the same lot (see figure 1).

Secondary suite in or linked to a detached home



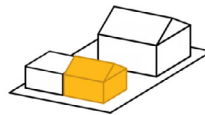
Garden suite a.k.a. coach or carriage house, in the yard of a detached home



Tiny home (possibly on wheels), as small as 10m² in the yard of a detached home



Garage/lane suite in, by or above a garage



Secondary suite in or linked to a duplex or town house



Figure 1: ADU examples

This document provides ADU examples in small-to medium-sized BC communities.

Attached ADUs

Attached ADUs (secondary suites) are dwelling units that are attached to the principal residence - either below it, above it, or adjoined to its side - yet are completely self-contained. In 2019, the Province of BC amended the BC Building Code to allow secondary suites in multi-family buildings in addition to single-family residences. This gave local governments the choice to allow secondary suites in side-by-side buildings such as semi-detached dwellings, duplexes, townhouses and row housing. Maximum size restrictions (90m² or 40% of the size of the main dwelling, whichever is less) for secondary suites were also removed from the provincial building code, allowing local governments to set their own size restrictions for secondary suites in their zoning bylaws.

Detached ADUs

Detached ADUs may take the form of a stand-alone structure in the back yard (garden suite) or on a lane (laneway house) or a suite within an accessory structure that also accommodates other auxiliary uses such as a workshop or garage (carriage house).

Detached ADUs are subordinate to the principal dwelling on the property in terms of scale and siting.

Detached ADUs require services extended from the principal home (or sometimes directly from the street) and a separate foundation and must meet BC Building Code requirements.

Zoning bylaws typically lay out the height and size limits of the suite, site coverage limits, setbacks to ensure units don't compromise privacy or vistas of adjacent homes, and parking requirements (usually one additional space), and stipulate that the units cannot be stratified.

Usually only one detached ADU is permitted per parcel.

Form and character requirements (outlines privacy, shading, siting, landscape elements, siting considerations, windows, rooftops, usable outdoor space, heritage, parking/driveways, and access) may be set out in development permit guidelines. The municipality issues a development permit after it confirms the application is consistent with the guidelines. Council may approve the development permit or they may delegate it to staff to approve.

Detached ADUs may be installed when the lot is first developed/redeveloped, or retrofitted onto the lot after the principal residence is built.

Municipalities usually charge separate utility fees for a detached ADU, often the same as for the principal dwelling. Municipalities with development cost charges may apply the charge on a detached ADU.

Terminology Notes

In BC, there is no uniformity in the use of terms for ADUs. Attached ADUs are usually referred to as secondary suites in zoning bylaws and other local government plans and policies, and the BC Building Code reserves the term secondary suite only for attached ADUs. However, some local governments have chosen to use secondary suite also for detached ADUs even though that does not align with the Building Code. Other local governments, to distinguish detached ADUs from attached ADUs, use a variety of different terms including simply accessory dwelling unit, detached accessory dwelling unit, garden suite, laneway house, carriage house, secondary residence, cottage, cabin, and more. In the sections below, each local government's term for attached ADU or detached ADU is defined and used.

Examples: One ADU per lot

CITY OF NEW WESTMINSTER

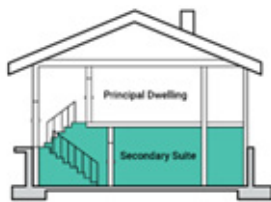
The City of New Westminster has a Secondary Suites Program that allows attached ADUs (secondary suites) as a permitted use in all single detached residential districts across all residential neighbourhoods in the city. Detached ADUs (referred to as laneway and carriage houses) are permitted on single detached residential properties that are designated Residential – Detached and Semi-Detached Housing (RD), or Residential – Ground Oriented Infill Housing (RGO) in the Official Community Plan (OCP). A rezoning in 2017 now allows property owners to build a laneway and carriage house without having to go through an individual rezoning process. Other details include:

- A lot is not permitted to have more than one secondary suite. In addition to the principal dwelling unit and a secondary suite, one bonus detached ADU is permitted provided that it will not be stratified and will not be sold separately.
- Secondary suites are not permitted in duplexes.
- Two parking spaces are required per site where there is a single detached dwelling with a secondary suite, or laneway or carriage house.
- Authorization of a secondary suite requires only a Building Permit; design guidelines are provided, which include mandatory requirement.
- A Development Permit is required for laneway and carriage houses to ensure they are designed to fit within existing neighbourhoods, have minimal impact on streetscapes or privacy, and ensure livability of the dwelling unit. The [Laneway and Carriage House Guide](#) provides guidance on submitting a development permit application and the [Laneway and Carriage House Development Permit Guidelines](#) provides detailed information on the process. Development Permits are approved by staff (Director of Development Services).

CITY OF QUESNEL

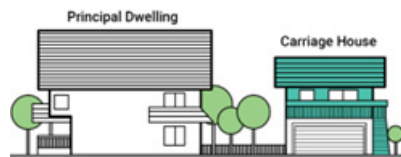
The City of Quesnel permits both attached and detached ADUs in residential zones on lots with single-family detached homes and in duplexes. ADUs in Quesnel include secondary suites (attached ADUs) and carriage houses and secondary dwellings (detached ADUs).

Secondary Suites



A secondary suite is a separate, self-contained living area contained within a single-family home, duplex, or row house. Only one suite per principal dwelling is permitted.

Carriage Homes



A carriage home is a detached home located in conjunction with an accessory building (e.g., garage). It must have access to a laneway.

Secondary Dwellings



A secondary dwelling is a smaller detached home located on the same lot as the principal dwelling.

One parking space is required for each ADU in addition to the number of parking spaces (2) required for each principal dwelling unit.

The City of Quesnel worked with a local architectural firm, selected from an RFP process, and paid to create five pre-reviewed detached ADU plans available to residents to select from and develop for no charge. Using one of the pre-reviewed designs will expedite the building permit process. The building permit fees for the first 15 completed applications will be waived, and residents will receive a \$600 rebate for meeting Step Code 3 or higher until October 31, 2023. If the pre-reviewed plan is not altered, the application will be reviewed, and a building permit issued within three days. (After the first 15 permits have been provided for free, applicants will need to pay for building permits.)

Any structural changes to a pre-reviewed plan will require a proponent to contact the architecture firm directly to adjust the plan at a rate set by the architect; the plan will no longer be considered a pre-reviewed plan or be eligible for the benefits listed above.

CITY OF COURTENAY

The City of Courtenay adopted its OCP bylaw 3070 on July 25, 2022, which included a new land use designation for infill: Urban Residential. This zone covers all the existing single family residential zones and will permit infill development throughout Courtenay in the form of attached ADUs (secondary suites), duplexes, and detached ADUs (carriage houses, granny flats and secondary residences).

Attached ADUs in the City of Courtenay are referred to as secondary suites. A secondary suite means a dwelling unit which is accessory to the principal use being made of the lot upon which the secondary suite is located and is within a building containing only one other dwelling unit and classified as a single real estate entity.

A carriage house means an accessory dwelling unit located on the second storey of an accessory building accessory to a single residential use which contains no interior access to any part of the accessory building below the carriage house and is located on a lot that is a single real estate entity.

A secondary residence is an additional dwelling unit that is accessory to a single residential dwelling and on a property over 1,250 m² in lot area.

One principal dwelling and one secondary suite, secondary residence or carriage house (i.e., max two residences) is permitted per lot.

In R-1 and R-2 zones, a secondary suite is not permitted in duplex dwellings, and a carriage house or granny flat is not permitted on a lot with a duplex.

Where two secure, covered bicycle parking spaces are provided on a lot, the minimum number of vehicle parking spaces for a primary residence on the lot may be reduced by one space, except in the case of a strata lot where 0.5 common property visitor parking spaces and two secure covered bicycle parking spaces are provided per lot, the minimum number of vehicle parking space for primary residences on each strata lot may be reduced by one space.

One parking space per secondary suite is required only where a secondary suite is located on a property fronting a cul-de-sac.

Examples: More than one ADU on same lot

Most smaller municipalities in BC prohibit more than one ADU on the same residential lot, for example having both an attached and detached unit. In municipalities with a large proportion of homes already accommodating an attached ADU, this limits detached ADU creation and also fails to take advantage of available space, land resources and infrastructure capacity. A few communities are now allowing more than one ADU per lot by implementing bylaw changes that lay out the zones where both types of ADUs are allowed, the conditions under which they are permitted, and the relevant planning standards.

This zoning allows options such as:

- Both a detached and an attached ADU on smaller lots in targeted infill areas
- Both a detached and an attached ADU on larger lots where density increases are desirable
- Both a detached and an attached ADU in rural areas on very large lots with adequate septic capacity
- Subdivision of single-detached dwellings to accommodate two or more internal rental units and a detached ADU in the yard

VILLAGE OF CUMBERLAND

Cumberland has a large residential infill zone where both attached ADUs (referred to as secondary suites) and detached ADUs (referred to as ADUs) are permitted on the same lot. The municipality rezoned an older R1 area within walking distance of the commercial core to R-1A, ground-oriented medium-density. The R1 zoning only permitted secondary suites and the rezoning added detached ADUs as an additional permitted use on single-family lots.

Recreational vehicles are specifically excluded from the definition of detached ADUs. ADUs in the infill zone can be used as short-term rentals.

An extra parking space is required for each secondary suite and detached ADU; however, property owners can pay into a cash-in-lieu fund instead of installing the required off-street parking on lots in the medium-density R-1A zone near the commercial centre where space is constrained.

A development permit is required for detached units in the infill zone following the [Village of Cumberland Development Permit Area Guidelines](#).

CITY OF NELSON

The City of Nelson allows both attached ADUs (secondary suites) and detached ADUs (laneway houses) in most residential zones. The City of Nelson uses the BC Building Code definition of Secondary Suite as “a self-contained dwelling unit located within a building or portion of a building,” whereas a laneway house is defined as a detached apartment-sized living space of up to 958ft² typically located in the backyard of a single-family detached house. It does not have to be adjacent to a back lane.

Laneway house guide: <https://www.nelson.ca/DocumentCenter/View/2638/Laneway-House-How-to-Guide?bidId=>

In the R1 zone, a house plus either a secondary suite or a laneway house is permitted on lots between 276 and 555m²; on lots greater than 555m², three dwelling units are permitted, for example a house, a laneway house and a secondary suite.

In the R3 zone, lots under 278m² can have a house plus either a secondary suite or a laneway house, and in lots over 278m², there is unlimited density allowing laneway houses in nearly all scenarios contingent on lot coverage, parking and setback restrictions.

Lots in the downtown area and residential zones can have a laneway house regardless of lot size.

Secondary suites are allowed in duplexes.

One on-site parking space is required per ADU in addition to the parking requirement for the existing dwelling units on the property. To encourage property owners to have both a laneway house and a secondary suite, the parking requirement for the principal residence and two ADUs is three spaces. Also, the additional parking requirement for laneway houses is waived if there are already two parking spaces on-site and ample street parking is available.

The City of Nelson offers a 75% discount on water and sewer utility billing for all ADUs (attached or detached), meaning that an ADU will be charged \$297 annually while a principal unit is charged \$1,190, a difference of \$793. Illegal, nonconforming suites, as well as suites used for short-term rental, pay the same rate as the principal dwelling.

Property owners have the option of choosing one of three pre-reviewed designs for laneway houses at a cost of \$1,000 (a fee that the City passes on to the designer of the chosen design). The designs include photos, site and dwelling drawings with variations, and a proforma. All pre-reviewed plans are designed to meet at least Step 2 or 3 of the Energy Step Code with construction details provided on energy efficiency options. Using a pre-approved design reduces the costs of a design, and can speed up the approval processes, but using a pre-approved design is not required. Homeowners that purchase a pre-reviewed plan benefit from a quicker application review process as the development permit and building permit have been pre-reviewed by staff, and they may receive a \$450 development permit refund in some cases. A [guide](#) to the pre-reviewed plans is available to homeowners.



TOWN OF SMITHERS

The Town of Smithers has allowed attached ADUs (secondary suites) in single detached dwellings in most residential zones (urban and rural) since 2011. A secondary suite is defined as “an additional dwelling unit located in a single detached, semi-detached (duplex) or townhouse dwelling.” A detached ADU (carriage house), defined as a self-contained dwelling that is constructed as a separate building to a single-family home, is permitted in most residential-zoned properties if there is an existing single-family home on the property, and there is sufficient space to build a carriage house in order to meet the setbacks, parcel coverage and parking requirements.

A single-family dwelling may concurrently have a carriage house and a secondary suite, provided that the applicable regulations are met for each use, and ADUs are permitted in duplexes.

One off-street parking space is required to serve a secondary suite. For a carriage house, one additional parking space must be provided in the back yard, as well as an illuminated pathway between the fronting street and the carriage house.

A development permit is not required for secondary suites. For carriage houses a development permit is only required when the construction value is more than \$75,000.

The Town of Smithers has produced a [4 Steps to a Secondary Suite guide](#) that describes the zoning, regulations, costs, required permits and Building Code highlights for secondary suites.

A [6 Steps to a Carriage House pamphlet](#) provides guidance to homeowners wishing to build a carriage house.

DISTRICT OF SQUAMISH

The District of Squamish permits attached ADUs (secondary suites) and detached ADUs (simply called Accessory Dwelling Units in Squamish) in all residential zones that allow single-unit dwelling. A secondary suite and an ADU are allowed on the same lot, but only one of each is allowed. Secondary suites in triplex units on corner lots are also allowed. Short-term rentals are not permitted in secondary suites and carriage houses. Secondary suites and ADUs:

- Form a single real estate entity with the principal dwelling (no stratification is allowed)
- Require one additional off-street parking space
- Are not permitted to be used as a short-term rental
- Are restricted to maximum size (and height for ADUs) and height based on lot size, with increased size allowances for ADUs achieving energy goals

The District of Squamish also allows multi-unit flex units, a new form of housing permitted in certain zones. Flex units are rental suites permitted in two-unit dwellings and townhomes, as long as they meet BC Building Code requirements for fire separation and the following zoning requirements:

- Is permitted as an Accessory Use.
- Only one flex unit is permitted per strata-titled unit.
- Flex units must provide one parking space, must not be stratified, and must have a gross floor area greater than 40m²
- Flex units cannot be used as short-term rentals

Development Cost Charges were exempted in 2016 on secondary suites and ADUs to help stimulate the creation of rental housing units in Squamish. This has resulted in a typical savings to secondary suite costs of \$3,500 or more for a 70m² suite. Building permit fees are reduced for secondary suites.

The zoning bylaw was updated in 2020 to include low carbon and smart growth neighbourhood incentive programs, which allows greater density for buildings that incorporate low carbon sources and/or is built to a step higher than the Step Code committed to by the District.

Recommendations from practices reviewed

Zoning

- Allow attached and detached ADUs in all residential zones that allow single-family dwellings.
- Allow more than one ADU per lot (based on minimum lot size, if desired).
- Permit ADUs within duplexes (based on minimum lot size, if desired) and even triplexes or townhomes.
- Remove size restrictions in zoning for attached ADUs (BC Building Code has removed size restrictions).
- Do not restrict detached ADUs to a maximum gross floor area; base the allowable size on maximum lot coverage allowed for all buildings and structures, and with additional allowances for lot with detached ADUs.
- Allow detached ADUs in the rear and side of yards.
- Allow for heights that can accommodate loft-style units (e.g., above detached garage or two-storey ADUs) in detached ADUs to fit on smaller footprints.
- Relax parking requirements: one ADU would not need to provide any off-street parking, and one parking space is required if there is both an attached and detached ADU.
- Provide secure bicycle parking on site, with an outlet for plugging e-bikes.

Process

- Create pre-approved detached ADU designs to reduce costs for homeowners/builders to build an ADU and to expedite approval processes.
- Delegate authority to staff to approve development permits (without need for council approval) where they are still required.
- Provide detailed ADU guides or checklists (including parking requirements, size/height/siting, approval processes) and design guidelines.
- Make building an ADU as easy as possible, e.g., through expedited approval processes, pre-approved sample designs, individual support to homeowners, removal of requirement for development permits.
- Make fees (e.g., utility, garbage, water) consistent and simple, providing discounted fees compared to the principal residence.

Missing Middle Housing

Missing middle housing refers to infill housing that includes townhouses, houseplexes (up to six units per building), corner townhouses and small apartments (generally up to 12 units). Missing middle housing is defined as: “A range of house-scale buildings with multiple units—compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes—located in a walkable neighborhood.”



This document provides examples from medium-sized BC communities that have implemented missing middle/infill housing - from duplexes to sixplexes, as well as recommendations from leading practices. The examples provide a high-level overview, and links are provided to websites/documents with more specific details.

City of Victoria Missing Middle Initiative

Victoria City Council approved the Missing Middle [bylaw](#) regulations on January 26, 2023, which allow up to six homes on an average residential lot. The three forms of Missing Middle housing allowed are houseplexes (townhouses, duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes), corner townhouses and heritage conserving infill, in addition to single-family homes in Traditional Residential areas of the city.

Council amended, adopted and/or approved the following:

- **Missing Middle zoning regulations**
- OCP Amendment (**Bylaw No. 22-044**) covering policy areas:
 - Land management and development (built form, place character features, uses and density)
 - Housing and homelessness (ownership housing)
 - Development Permit Areas and Heritage Conservation Areas
 - Glossary (definition of missing middle housing)
- Land Use Procedures Bylaw Amendment (**Bylaw No. 22-057**)
- Affordable Housing Standards Bylaw (**Bylaw No. 22-056**)
- **Missing Middle Design Guidelines** (2023)
- **Tenant Assistance Policy** (July 2022)



ZONING

The **Zoning Regulation Bylaw** encourages the development of missing middle housing forms in specific single-family dwelling zones and two-family dwelling zones. Bylaw amendments include:

- Permitted uses:
 - i. heritage conserving infill
 - ii. secondary dwelling unit
 - iii. accessory building
 - iv. uses created as a result of a house conversion
 - v. houseplex
 - vi. corner townhouse
- Community amenities as condition of additional density
- Houseplex, corner townhouse and heritage-conserving infill regulations
- Vehicle parking and bicycle parking regulations
- Highway dedication amenity requirements

Missing Middle zoning regulations (compared to current zoning):

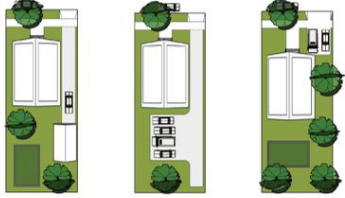
- Allow more units on each property
- Have requirements for family-sized housing (three-bedroom units)
- Have requirements for adaptable housing
- Require the inclusion of a secondary suite
- Require design review against comprehensive guidelines
- Recognize that to accommodate more units, more of a property will be used for the building, and that it is more likely that a development would build to the maximum allowed site coverage. To ensure the best use of open space and room for trees, site requirements include:
 - smaller front yards (bringing buildings closer to the sidewalk)
 - generally the same side yard spaces (keeping buildings the same distance from one another)
 - generally greater or comparable rear yards (keeping room for open space in the backyard)

To inform the Missing Middle Housing Initiative, the City of Victoria conducted a broad community engagement initiative to seek public input and support. Engagement focused on clear, specific questions including trade-offs, based on in-depth work done ahead of time (e.g., typologies and architectural testing) guided by the specific directions required to make recommendations to council.

Confront Hard Trade-offs Once & For All

Pick two: 3+ homes Green Space Parking

- Work through outstanding trade-offs
- What do plans say about priorities?
- Interdepartmental and community engagement to inform structured decision making



MMHI Webinar | May 3, 2023



City of Coquitlam Housing Choices Program

The City of Coquitlam updated its Housing Choices Program to support the development of small-scale, ground-oriented housing in low-density residential areas of Southwest Coquitlam (areas designated Neighbourhood Attached Residential (NAR)). The purpose of the changes was to encourage more small-scale projects that add to the range of housing options available for existing residents and new families, and to make it easier to develop smaller, attached forms such as duplex, triplex, fourplex and multiplex forms.

The Housing Choices Program includes:

- Rezoning approximately 700 single-family properties in RS-1 and RS-3 zoned properties to the revised RT-1 infill residential zone. This zone provides for ground-oriented infill residential uses in developments comprising up to a maximum of four principal dwelling units per lot.
- Revising the RT-3 Multiplex zone, which now allows for multiple attached building forms or multiple single-detached units on larger lots and multiple-lot assemblies.
- New Residential Infill Development Permit guidelines.
- More flexible parking (allowing 100% tandem parking as per Infill Development Permit guidelines).

The City of Coquitlam created a new Official Community Plan (OCP) land use designation, Neighbourhood Attached Residential, to provide for innovative, small-scale attached housing types that can be accommodated through a variety of building arrangements. This designation provides council with the ability to give consideration to applications for new small-scale ground-oriented housing choices in advance of completing new, or updating, existing Neighbourhood Plans. OCP amendments include policies to specifically promote small-scale, ground-oriented housing types.

ZONING

Properties within the Housing Choices areas that are now zoned **RT-1: Infill Residential Zone** have increased development options and flexibility that include the following housing options:

- i. One-family residential
- ii. Duplex residential (lot must be fronted by a street, and if applicable, a lane)
- iii. Triplex residential (lot must be fronted by a street, and if applicable, a lane; garden cottage, carriage house, triplex residential and fourplex residential uses are only permitted on lots designated Neighbourhood Attached Residential)
- iv. Fourplex residential (lot must be fronted by a street, and if applicable, a lane; garden cottage, carriage house, triplex residential and fourplex residential uses are only permitted on lots designated Neighbourhood Attached Residential)

Reduced minimum lot sizes, increased density and more flexible parking arrangements have also been provided. Duplex, triplex and fourplex development under the RT-1 zone must now be contained within one main building, and an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is not permitted in these properties. In addition to yielding smaller and more affordable units, this is also intended to improve overall site design and usability of outdoor space. A rezoning is not required for these housing options in the RT-1 zone. Properties larger than 930 m² may have greater redevelopment options by rezoning to the RT-3 zone.

The **RT-3: Multiplex zone** now allows for multiple attached building forms or multiple single-detached units on larger lots and multiple-lot assemblies. In most cases, development under the RT-3 zone will require a rezoning application. ADUs are not permitted.

Overview of Development Options and Processes

See inside this guide for information about options, and back page for information about processes.

Min. Lot Area	Min. Lot Width	Housing Option	Max. Density (FAR)	Zone	Rezoning Required	Subdivision Required ²	Development Permit (DP) Required
370 m ² (3,983 ft ²)	10 m (33 ft)/ 12 m (39 ft) ²	Single detached house ¹	0.5	RT-1	⊗	⊗	⊗
370 m ² (3,983 ft ²)	10 m (33 ft)/ 12 m (39 ft) ²	Single detached house ¹ with secondary suite OR backyard suite ⁴	0.6	RT-1	⊗	⊗	⊗
465 m ² (5,006 ft ²)	10 m (33 ft)/ 12 m (39 ft) ²	Duplex	0.65	RT-1	⊗	⊗	✔
555 m ² (5,974 ft ²)	10 m (33 ft)/ 12 m (39 ft) ²	Single detached house ¹ w/ secondary suite AND backyard suite ⁴	0.6	RT-1	⊗	⊗	⊗
650 m ² (6,997 ft ²)	18.5 m (61 ft)	Triplex	0.75	RT-1	⊗	⊗	✔
740 m ² (7,966 ft ²)	20 m (66 ft)/ 24 m (79 ft) ²	Two single detached houses ¹ (i.e. two-lot subdivision)	0.5-.6	RT-1	⊗	✔	⊗
740 m ² (7,966 ft ²)	20 m (66 ft)	Fourplex	0.75	RT-1	⊗	⊗	✔
930 m ² (10,010 ft ²)	NA	Multiplex	0.85	RT-3	✔	⊗	✔

¹ A subdivision could be required depending on specific site conditions.
² Width for a corner lot or a lot with no developed lane.

³ Single detached house refers to one-family residential.
⁴ Backyard suite refers to either a carriage house or garden cottage.

Figure 1 Coquitlam infill development options and processes

There is a parking requirement of two spaces per unit for all principal housing types, with the option for 100% of the parking to be tandem stalls. The accessory residential uses, including secondary suites, garden cottages and carriage houses, have a parking requirement of one stall per use and cannot be in tandem.

New **Residential Infill Development Permit Guidelines** apply to duplex, triplex, fourplex, and multiplex development (Housing Choices projects) and cover various topics such as good neighbour design, vehicle access and parking, garbage and recycling, building design, and landscaping. Development permits are not required for single detached homes, single detached home with one or two ADUs, or two single detached homes on a subdivided lot. Design guidelines for new developments requiring development permits can be found [here](#) and the design guidelines checklist can be found [here](#).

City of Kelowna Infill Housing



The City of Kelowna wanted to build much needed housing supply by focusing on infill and streamlining development processes. In 2016, the City of Kelowna conducted the Infill Challenge, an innovative competition to identify new designs for infill housing in parts of Kelowna's urban core. The result of the 2016 Infill Challenge was the creation of a unique four-dwelling zone called **RU-7**, which was applied (i.e., rezoned) to more than 800 properties. The **winning designs** were exempted from the requirement for a development permit, and building permit reviews were accelerated. If a property owner elected to use one of the winning designs, they would be eligible for the fast-track program that skipped the development permit stage and received approved applications in about two weeks. Approximately 100 projects totaling 494 units were built (one in five lots redeveloped) over five years. 165 of the RU-7 lots have been developed into fourplexes (and gone through development permit and building permit).

- 156 building permits
- 494 units constructed
- 368 net new units

The Fast Track program ended in 2021, but developers can still use the Infill Design Challenge (IDC) 1.0 designs and receive a fast turnaround on development applications. The City of Kelowna is currently looking to streamline approval processes and at re-implementing another version of pre-approved design options.

Design competition process

- The **Infill Design Challenge (IDC)** was initiated to invite feasible, developer-driving projects. Finalists were chosen by public vote. The IDC2.0 was judged by an expert panel.
- The IDC1.0 cost \$10,000-15,000. IDC2.0 cost <\$30,000, which included honoraria for panel members and some media costs.
- Homeowners/developers purchased detailed building plans (around \$5,000) from the designer, then customized them for their site, which still required survey, geotech, etc., in addition to the typical permit and consulting fees.

A second Infill Design Competition (IDC 2.0) was held in 2021 to further explore design ideas and opportunities for future infill. While IDC 1.0 involved only a narrow geographic area of centrally located, standard-sized lots with rear lane access, the City of Kelowna wished to explore more neighbourhoods that largely did not have laneway access but had the potential for redevelopment. A panel of judges selected three winning designs. City staff are currently determining options for implementation and using the learnings earnings from the two IDCs to develop the Infill Options Program with the following objectives:

- Introduction of new zoning regulations in Core Area Neighbourhoods (C-NHD)
- Faster and easier approvals processes
- Identified costs for infrastructure improvements
- Increased options for attainable housing
- Clear communications and guidance materials with the public and development community

This project would introduce new zoning regulations in C-NHD through rezoning and address:

- Zoning and site development regulations
- Design guidelines
- Internal approval processes and systems
- Infrastructure funding
- Off-site works

Official Community Plan (OCP) bylaw updates include:

- Including medium- and high-density housing forms
- Incorporating ground-oriented units in multi-family design
- Encouraging low-rise apartments and stacked townhouses up to six storeys
- Encouraging gentle densification in the form of ground-oriented residential uses such as houseplexes, townhouses and narrow lot housing to approximately two storeys

ZONING

The new zoning bylaw includes three multi-family zones (MF1, MF2, MF3) with varying height and density limits. The RU-7 zone has now been replaced with the MF1 – Infill Housing Zone, which allows for ground-oriented housing of two storeys (no limit on number of units, only a limit on FAR). MF2 – Townhouse Housing allows ground-oriented housing up to three storeys, and MF3 allows five- to six-storey buildings. Each zone can have an “r” added to it (through a rezoning process) that restrict the dwelling units to a rental-only tenure. MF3r has seen some good uptake, and there is a 10% parking reduction associated with it.

Section 13.1 - Zone Purposes	
Zones	Purpose
MF1 – Infill Housing	The purpose is to provide a zone for infill development within the core area of the City limiting development to ground-oriented housing of 2 storeys.
MF2 – Townhouse Housing	The purpose is to provide a zone for ground-oriented multiple housing (typically townhouse developments) up to 3 storeys on serviced urban lots.
MF3 – Apartment Housing	The purpose is to provide a zone primarily for apartments ranging up to 6 storeys on serviced urban lots with various commercial uses permitted on transit supportive corridors.

Village of Cumberland Infill Residential

The Village of Cumberland has created zoning that allows further densification within the residential infill area to align with the Official Community Plan goal of densifying the Village centre with a new residential infill land use. This designation aims to double the existing population within low-density neighbourhoods in close proximity to the Village core by allowing for:

- Detached Accessory Dwelling Units (referred to as ADUs), as well as secondary suites, are permitted within this new zone. ADUs no longer require a Development Permit (but must meet the zoning bylaw requirements).
- Minimum lot sizes for single family homes have been reduced to 325 metres² to allow for infill subdivision to small lots (e.g., with a single-family dwelling on each).
- New zoning regulations allow for residential infill development that supports compact, sustainable development, while maintaining neighbourhood character.



This land use is intended to accommodate ground-orientated medium-density housing within a 10-minute walk of the Historic Village Commercial Core. The area is envisioned as primarily single- and two-family dwellings in a more compact arrangement with densities ranging from 25 to 37 units per hectare (10 to 15 units per acre).

The renovation of heritage homes to include multiple rental suites is also envisioned within this area. Typical ground-oriented medium-density development includes the following densification scenarios:

- Narrow lot single family dwellings
- Single family with and accessory dwelling unit (garage apartment, coach house, laneway house)
- Duplex dwelling units
- Townhouse dwelling units
- Rowhouse dwelling units

ZONING

R-1A – Infill Residential Zone allows one single family dwelling as the principal building, and up to one secondary suite and one ADU as accessory buildings/uses per lot. ADUs may be up to two storeys (7.5 m maximum).

RM-1 – Ground-Oriented Residential Multi-Family Zone allows a duplex or townhouse as a principal use.

RM-5 - Rental Tenure Multi-Family is a new zone that allows fourplexes (a residential building consisting of four principal dwelling units placed one above the other or attached side by side, each of which has an independent entrance) and townhouses. An OCP review is coming up and the goal is to increase the RM-5 rental tenure zoning in more zones.

- a. All units in this zone are required to be under residential rental tenure.
- b. To realize a density bonus, the following are required:
 - i. A housing agreement with the Village to reserve a minimum of 1/3 of the density bonus units at below-market rent in a form acceptable to the Village.
 - ii. A rental agreement with a non-profit housing society which will manage and rent out the units to low- or medium-income individuals or families.

RM-1, RM-2, RM-3, RM-5 and MU-1 zones now allow duplexes, townhouses and rowhouses.

District of Squamish Duplexes

The District of Squamish has allowed duplexes in a large portion of the community for many years and in the last eight years (since 2015) began to change single-family zoning to allow for ADUs (dwelling unit detached from principal dwelling and includes coach houses, carriage houses, and laneway houses) and secondary suites. More recently, triplexes and cottage clusters are being allowed. Looking forward, Squamish is looking to expand the areas where triplexes can be built while also initiating neighbourhood area planning where there are opportunities to increase housing diversity and infill housing.

ZONING

DUPLEXES AND COTTAGE CLUSTERS

Residential 2 (RS-2) permits the following dwelling units:

- (a) single-unit dwelling, excluding a mobile home
- (b) two-unit dwelling (also permitted in Multiple Unit Residential 1 and Multiple Unit Residential 2)
- (f) triplex dwelling, subject to Section 8.12
- (g) cottage cluster, subject to Section 8.13

A cottage cluster consists of a minimum of four and a maximum of 10 dwelling units.

The zoning bylaw stipulates minimum lot sizes; however, the District of Squamish has recently removed all lot size restrictions and is allowing duplexes to be built if they fit on the lot.

Triplex dwellings within the RS-2 zone are only permitted on corner lots, and secondary suites are permitted in triplex units. The District of Squamish is now looking at allowing triplexes in other lots that can accommodate them.

Currently there are a couple of duplex dwellings that contain multiple units within them:

- Purpose-built rental duplex: 14 rooms total with common amenity space within each duplex dwelling.
- Duplex in Brackendale larger lots: two primary dwelling units comprising suites and an ADU (5 units in total); there are three or four of these dwellings so far.

The zoning bylaw was updated in 2021 to include a low carbon incentive program.

The Low Carbon Incentive applies community-wide to all new residential developments in most residential zones, and offers a bonus maximum floor area ratio. It would also:

- Reduce the permitted density allowed by one third for buildings that use high- carbon energy sources, but allow buildings to achieve full density if they incorporate only low-carbon sources such as baseboard heaters, heat pumps and electric hot water tanks.
- Allow home builders to use high-carbon energy sources such as natural gas furnaces or hot water tanks; however, they would be required to build a home one-third smaller in size than previously allowed.

The District of Squamish has also proposed the Smart Growth Neighbourhood Incentive program, which aims to incentivize development in existing residential areas along the Core Transit Network in order to encourage residential density that supports more frequent transit service.

The Smart Growth Neighbourhood Incentive would:

- Allow for increased density along the core transit network and neighbourhood nodes.
- Allow for additional housing forms to gently increase density in the forms of duplexes and triplexes and added floor space in multi-family properties.
- Require a proposed cash amenity contribution of 50% of the increased value achieved through the density bonus.

The proposed Smart Growth Neighbourhood Incentive density increases include the following:

- On single-unit (RS-1 and RMH-2) properties, duplexes would be allowed, as would triplexes on corner lots.
- On large duplex (RS-2) properties, or duplex properties with rear lanes, triplexes would be allowed.
- On multi-family properties (RM-1, RM-2, RM-3 and C-1) an average of 25% more floor space, depending on the zone, could be permitted to be built.

Within the RS-1 and RS-2 zones, most elements of the permitted physical size are not changing. The incentive does not allow buildings to be taller or larger in gross floor area, nor does it reduce the required setbacks. The overall size of the residential construction in these zones is intended to remain consistent with what is currently permitted. Instead, the proposal is to allow those buildings to support more dwelling units within the same physical size.

The proposed Smart Growth Neighbourhood Incentive is only available to developments that have taken advantage of the Low Carbon Incentive.

City of New Westminster Infill Housing

The City of New Westminster launched its Infill Housing Program in 2017, which comprises two phases. Phase One includes policies that encourage laneway and carriage houses, and townhouses and rowhouses. The City of New Westminster is currently conducting a comprehensive review of Phase One, including a survey of the community. Feedback received will be used to help identify recommendations to council about refinements to the program (including design guidelines, zoning regulations and/or approval process). Staff may also recommend changes to the Official Community Plan (OCP) land use designation map to allow for infill townhouses and rowhouses in more areas of the city.

Phase Two of the Infill Housing Program is now focusing on duplexes up to sixplexes.

Infill Townhouses and Rowhouses

Townhouses and rowhouses are attached, ground-oriented units. The units are side-by-side, not stacked. Rowhouses are fee simple developments with parking on each fee simple lot. Townhouses are strata title developments which may have shared or designated parking typically at the rear of the property. Infill townhouse and rowhouse projects provide smaller and fewer units than standard townhouse projects, which helps them fit better in established neighbourhoods.

New Westminster's new OCP (2017) includes two new residential land use designations: Residential - Infill Townhouse (RT) and Residential – Ground Oriented Infill Housing (RGO). These designations were created to allow more diversity, availability and affordability of ground-oriented housing, while keeping the general character of the neighbourhoods where they are added. Infill townhouses and rowhouses are permitted on properties with these designations. Similar to laneway and carriage houses, the OCP includes a Development Permit Area with guidelines for infill townhouses and rowhouses to ensure that they complement the existing single detached dwelling context through appropriate building form, scale, and design.

Duplexes, Triplexes and Quadraplexes

Phase Two of the Infill Housing Program will focus on these forms of housing infill. The interim council-endorsed **Duplex, Triplex and Quadraplex Interim Development Review Policy** is currently being used to address duplex, triplex and quadraplex applications, and secondary suites in triplexes and quadraplexes. These policies will guide applications for these forms of housing until specific policies, development permit guidelines and zoning regulations are developed.

ZONING

As part of the October 2017 Zoning Bylaw amendments, a new Infill Townhouse and Rowhouse Residential (RT) zone was created with the intent of facilitating smaller scale, infill projects (small-scale, side-by-side townhouses and rowhouses). No properties were rezoned to this RT zone. An applicant wishing to develop an infill townhouse or rowhouse project would be required to go through a rezoning process.

The Zoning Bylaw Amendment for the RT Zone is [here](#).

Required permits to develop an RT or RGO project are:

- Rezoning application
- **Development permit**
- Building permit
- Tree permit

For Phase Two, all pilot projects will be required to apply to rezone the property to a comprehensive development (CD) zone, which is crafted for the unique context of the project. Applications on (RGO) Residential – Ground Oriented Housing-designated properties will also require a development permit.

The Townhouses and Rowhouses Development Permit Guidelines can be found [here](#).

Recommendations from practices reviewed

Zoning

- Pre-zone select residential lots to allow for increased density by right.
 - Higher densities can be permitted in areas closer to downtown, amenities and transit.
- Remove restrictions on number of units and stipulate maximum FAR instead.
- Use FAR rather than units per hectare to regulate density; this provides flexibility for developers but also encourages smaller-sized, more affordable units. Some requirements for family-sized units may be required.
- Reduce parking requirements for those areas closer to amenities, active transportation routes and transit.
- Permit smaller minimum lot sizes or remove lot size restrictions.
- Permit subdivision of single residential lots to allow for smaller lot development.
- Permit an ADU or flex unit in duplexes and triplexes.
- Provide secure bicycle parking on site, with an outlet for plugging e-bikes.
- Include rental-only zoning in specific locations (e.g., closer to amenities and transit); higher densities and lower parking ratios will help ensure development of rental housing.
- Reduce development cost charges for desired development types.

Process

- Pre-zone significant areas of the city to eliminate rezoning uncertainty and risk.
- Delegate authority to staff for development application approvals for applications that meet the zoning requirements.
- Provide financial incentives such as grants, tax exemptions and reduced permit fees to encourage development of missing middle housing, at least to jump-start this new type of development.
- Identify opportunities to create, and then replicate, development of fourplexes, which have proven to be an increasingly popular and cost-effective development type.
- Engage the whole community in conversations about housing choice, trade-offs and community goals.

WCS engagement
+ planning