

## Gross Floor Area

This information bulletin provides guidance on calculation of gross floor area for:

- a) the construction, addition, or alteration of a building, or addition or alteration of the use of a building, in the R Residential, RM Multiple-Family Residential, C Commercial, M Industrial, B Business Centre, P Public and Institutional, A Agricultural, and the CD Comprehensive Development Districts, or portion thereof, based on the above noted Districts, where density is regulated by gross floor area; and,
- b) the calculation of the required off-street parking and off-street loading spaces where gross floor area is used as a unit of measurement for this purpose.

---

*"This information bulletin is provided for convenience only and is not in substitution of the Burnaby Zoning Bylaw, or any other applicable City Bylaws, or Provincial or Federal Codes or laws. You must satisfy yourself that any existing or proposed construction or other developments comply with such Bylaws, Codes or other laws."*

---

Effective **2020 September 14** the Burnaby Zoning Bylaw 1965 was amended to revise the regulations regarding the calculation of gross floor area. According to the amended bylaw, gross floor area continues to be measured to the outer limit of a building on a lot, however, additional areas of a building may be excluded from gross floor area. Table -1 summarizes the Zoning Bylaw's regulations regarding calculation of gross floor area, before and after the bylaw amendments.

This bylaw amendment may affect the total floor areas in habitable and employment-related spaces, and consequently the required off-street parking and off-street loading spaces where gross floor area is used as a unit of measurement for calculation of parking and loading spaces.

### WHICH DEVELOPMENTS MAY BE AFFECTED BY THIS BYLAW AMENDMENT?

Any development involving a Rezoning, Preliminary Plan Approval (PPA), and Building Permit (BP) application may be affected by this bylaw amendment. This includes:

- the construction of a new building;
- the addition or alteration of an existing building;
- the addition or alteration of the use of a building, or density of occupancy of a building; and,
- the addition or replacement of the exterior cladding.

It should be noted that the gross floor area exclusion of "non-structural exterior cladding" only applies to the existing developments involving the addition or replacement of the exterior cladding, as well as to new developments.

In addition, the exclusion of exterior wall thicknesses for the provision of insulating material only applies to the calculation of GFA. Setbacks, building depths, and other related requirements of the Zoning Bylaw continue to be measured to the actual face of the building.

**I HAVE AN ACTIVE APPLICATION WITH THE CITY.  
IS MY PROPOSAL AFFECTED BY THIS BYLAW AMENDMENT?**

Any development involving a Rezoning, PPA, and BP application that is under review, or has just been adopted or issued, may be affected by this bylaw amendment. This includes:

- a Rezoning, PPA, or BP application that is under review;
- a Rezoning that has been adopted, or a PPA, or a BP that has been issued for a building, but the construction has not been started; and,
- a building that is under construction.

How does the amended bylaw affect your active applications?

- the amended bylaw automatically applies to all PPA and BP applications that are under review, but have not been issued;
- the amended bylaw automatically applies to all Rezoning applications which have not received Second Reading;
- if you wish to utilize the floor areas that are made available through the application of the amended bylaw:
  - in a PPA or a BP application that has not been issued, or a Rezoning application which has not received Second Reading, please submit the revised drawings that identify the proposed additions, or revisions to the floor plan;
  - in a PPA or a BP application that has been issued, but the works have not been completed, please apply for a revision to the BP or PPA;
  - in a Rezoning application which has received Second Reading, the revised proposal may be required to be presented to the public at a Public Hearing. Please contact the Planning and Building Department to find out if the proposed changes require another Public Hearing.

**MY DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION IS FOR A PORTION OF THE BUILDING.  
IS THE BYLAW AMENDMENT APPLICABLE TO THE WHOLE BUILDING?**

If a Rezoning, PPA, or BP application or revision proposes an addition, or alteration to a portion of a building, or use, or density of occupancy of a portion of the building, the amended bylaw may apply to the whole building, provided that the architectural drawings verify the additional gross floor area exclusions within the whole building.

**WHAT SUBMISSION MATERIALS ARE REQUIRED TO VERIFY THE COMPLIANCE WITH  
THE BYLAW AMENDMENT?**

As part of a Rezoning, PPA, and BP application, submission of dimensioned architectural drawings, signed and sealed by an architect or other design professional trained in the field is required to verify the additional areas of a building to be excluded from calculation of gross floor area.

To exclude the exterior wall thicknesses from calculation of gross floor area, submission of a signed and sealed report prepared by an architect or other design professional trained in the field, confirming that the additional exterior wall thicknesses are used for the provision of insulating materials that will improve the building's energy performance, is required.

**IS THE BYLAW AMENDMENT APPLICABLE TO A BUILDING THAT IS LEGALLY NON-CONFORMING WITH REGARD TO FLOOR AREA?**

According to the *Local Government Act*, in an existing legally non-conforming building where the floor area exceeds the gross floor area requirements of the Zoning Bylaw, the building may be maintained, extended or altered provided that the repair, extension or alteration, when completed, would involve no further contravention of the bylaw than that existing at the time the repair, extension or alteration was started.

If you have any further questions please contact the Planning Department at 604.294.7400.

Table -1 Zoning Bylaw Regulations Regarding the Calculation of Gross Floor Area (GFA)

In <b>All Districts</b> Where Density Is Regulated by GFA, and for the Purpose of Calculating <b>Off-street Parking or Loading Spaces Based on GFA</b>		
Areas to be Included or Excluded from GFA	Previous Bylaw Regulations	Amended Bylaw Regulations
Exterior wall thicknesses.	Included.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In wood-frame exterior wall assemblies, exterior wall thicknesses in excess of 0.165 m (6.5 in.) that are used for the provision of insulating materials are excluded from gross floor area.</li> <li>In all other exterior wall assemblies, exterior wall thicknesses that are exclusively used for the provision of insulating materials are excluded from gross floor area.</li> </ul>
Non-structural exterior claddings.	Included.	Excluded.
Exterior access areas that are not fully enclosed (corridors, landings, staircases, stairways and similar areas).	Excluded in the RM, C, M, B, and P Districts.	Excluded.
Crawl spaces and attic spaces.	Excluded in the R1 through R5, R9 through R12, A1 through A3 Districts.	Excluded.
Exterior architectural features, chimneys, landscape features, and bay windows.	Excluded in the RM, C, M, B, and P Districts.	Excluded.
Balconies, terraces and decks that are not covered, and are not fully enclosed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excluded in the R1 through R5, R9 through R12, A1 through A3 Districts, up to a maximum area of 8% of the permitted gross floor area, plus an additional 3.7 m<sup>2</sup> (39.8 sq. ft.) for covered porches.</li> <li>Not regulated in the districts other than above.</li> </ul>	Excluded.

In the **RM, C, M, B,** and **P** Districts Where Density Is Regulated by GFA, **Category A Supportive Housing Facilities** in the **R** Districts, and for the Purpose of Calculating **Off-street Parking or Loading Spaces Based on GFA**

Areas to be Included or Excluded from GFA	Previous Bylaw Regulations	Amended Bylaw Regulations
Areas exclusively providing access to areas excluded from gross floor area subject to Sec. 6.20(1) and 6.20(3) of the Zoning Bylaw.	Included.	Excluded.
Elevator shafts.	Included, with the exception of a portion of a penthouse containing elevator in the RM, C, M, B and P Districts.	Excluded on a floor to which the elevator does not provide access.
Balconies, terraces and decks that are covered, and partially enclosed so as to remain permanently open to the exterior environment.	Not regulated in the Zoning Bylaw.	Excluded.
Accessory communal recycling and garbage storages.	Included.	Excluded.
Accessory mechanical, electrical, heating, ventilating, or similar service facilities.	Excluded in the RM, C, M, B and P Districts, provided that such service facilities are located in a basement or cellar, or ventilating machinery is located in a penthouse.	Excluded.
Amenity spaces.	Excluded in the RM and P Districts.	Excluded.
Accessory communal laundry facilities.	Excluded in the RM, C, M, B and P Districts.	Excluded.
Accessory laundry facilities located in a basement or cellar.	Excluded in the RM, C, M, B and P Districts.	Excluded.
Accessory Storage located in a basement or cellar.	Excluded in the RM, C, M, B and P Districts.	Excluded.

**In the RM, C, M, B, and P Districts Where Density Is Regulated by GFA, Category A Supportive Housing Facilities in the R Districts, and for the Purpose of Calculating Off-street Parking or Loading Spaces Based on GFA**

Areas to be Included or Excluded from GFA	Previous Bylaw Regulations	Amended Bylaw Regulations
Accessory areas for non-commercial recreational and social purposes located in a basement or cellar.	Included.	Excluded.
Parking accessory to a principal use.	Excluded in the RM, C, M, B and P Districts.	Excluded.
Accessory bicycle storage.	Included.	Excluded.
Accessory end-of-trip facilities.	Excluded in the RM, C, M, B and P Districts, provided that such facilities are located in a basement or cellar.	Excluded.
Storage of scooters accessory to supportive housing facilities.	Included.	Excluded.
Private hospitals and supportive housing facility amenity spaces.	Excluded in the RM and P Districts, up to a maximum of 13.6% of the floor area included in the computation of the floor area ratio.	Excluded up to a maximum of 13.6% of the maximum permitted gross floor area.
Adaptable housing units.	Excluded in the RM, C, and P Districts, up to a maximum area of 1.86 m <sup>2</sup> (20 sq. ft.) of each adaptable housing unit and 0.93 m <sup>2</sup> (10 sq. ft.) of each adaptable bedroom in excess of the first adaptable bedroom.	Excluded up to a maximum area of 1.86 m <sup>2</sup> (20 sq. ft.) of each adaptable housing unit and 0.93 m <sup>2</sup> (10 sq. ft.) of each adaptable bedroom in excess of the first adaptable bedroom.
Child care facilities located in a basement or cellar.	Excluded in the RM, C, M, B, and P Districts.	Included.

In the **R** and **A** Districts Where Density is Regulated by Gross Floor Area, **Excluding**  
**Category A Supportive Housing Facilities**

Areas to be Included or Excluded from GFA	Previous Bylaw Regulations	Amended Bylaw Regulations
Garages and Carports.	<p>Excluded in the R1 through R5, R9 through R12, A1 through A3 Districts, up to a maximum of 42 m<sup>2</sup> (452.1 sq. ft.), with the exception of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the R1 through R5 and R9 Districts on a lot developed with a single family dwelling, where such garage or carport is located in a cellar.</li> <li>in the R10 and R11 Districts where such garage or carport is not located within 9.0 m (29.5 ft.) of the rear lot line, or is attached to the principal building on a lot with lane access.</li> </ul>	<p>Excluded up to a maximum of 42 m<sup>2</sup> (452.1 sq. ft.), with the exception of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the R1 through R5 Districts and R9 Districts on a lot developed with a single family dwelling, where such garage or carport is located in a cellar.</li> <li>in the R10 and R11 Districts, where such garage or carport is attached to a principal building on a lot with lane access. This provision does not apply to a lot with an extreme grade or other restrictions, where the Director of Engineering is satisfied that access from the lane is not feasible.</li> </ul>
Balconies, terraces, and decks that are covered (attached to a principal building or detached).	<p>Excluded in the R1 through R5, R9 through R12, A1 through A3 Districts, up to a maximum area of 8% of the permitted gross floor area, plus an additional 3.7 m<sup>2</sup> (39.8 sq. ft.) for covered porches, in the R1 through R5, R9 through R12, A1 through A3 Districts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excluded up to a maximum area of 14% of the permitted above grade floor area, provided that except for open guards with a maximum height of 1.07 m (3.5 ft.), not more than 60% of their perimeters are enclosed.</li> <li>Excluded where the vertical clear height of such appendages are less than 1.8 m (5.91 ft.) and not more than 60% of their perimeters are enclosed.</li> </ul>