

Stratification of Property

The purpose of this information guide is to provide property owners information regarding stratification of a property within the City.

The information contained within this guide is for convenience only and does not serve to substitute or supersede applicable City Bylaws, governing Provincial / Federal Codes, and laws. Any references to Bylaws, Codes and laws pertain to those effective at the time of this guide's creation or revision. If the date on this guide exceeds three (3) years, the information contained may be outdated- in such circumstance, refer to the current Bylaws, Codes and laws. Building Owners are responsible for ensuring that any existing or proposed construction, and other works, comply with all applicable Bylaws, Codes and laws.

Background

Strata property ownership in British Columbia is a unique form of real estate ownership that applies to residential, industrial, commercial, and mixed-use developments. Strata housing can include residential units in multi-level apartment buildings, multiplexes, townhouses, and subdivisions with shared common areas. When you purchase a unit in a strata property—whether it's a condominium, apartment, townhouse, or unit within a multiplex, you gain individual ownership of your unit while sharing collective ownership and responsibility (maintenance, repairs and costs), for common spaces such as hallways, lobbies, gardens, parking areas, and recreational facilities. These are referred to as “common areas.”

The [Province of British Columbia](#) provides resources for Strata Owners, Strata Residents and Strata Council Members. Information about strata corporations' bylaws and rules can be found on the Province of British Columbia's website. Additionally, the [Condominium Homeowners Association of BC \(CHOA\) website](#) offers further information about strata properties.

Information

The City of Burnaby does not require stratification of properties with multiple dwelling units, however, once occupied, the dwelling units can only be stratified through a Strata Conversion application through the City.

Strata housing can include apartment-style condos, duplexes, even multiple single-family homes on a single lot. Any property that contains a “primary dwelling unit,” can be stratified. In addition to strata housing there are also industrial, commercial, and mixed-use strata developments. Information regarding the different types of strata housing can be found on the [British Columbia Website](#).

Secondary Suites

Dwelling units classified as secondary suites under the BC Building Code must remain registered under the same title as the primary dwelling unit within which they are contained and so cannot be stratified.

Rowhouse Dwellings

In Burnaby, a rowhouse dwelling is one of at least 2 side-by-side dwelling units, each sharing a party wall with the adjoining unit and each unit being located on a separate fee simple lot. “Fee simple” ownership (also referred to as “freehold” ownership) is the same ownership model that people are familiar with for single-family homes where ownership of the land and any buildings on that land are kept as one real estate entity.

This means each rowhouse is on its own separate legal lot where any additional dwelling units, such as a secondary suite, cannot be stratified and sold separately. With the introduction of SSMUH housing types, fee simple rowhousing offers an alternative option to strata ownership. Dwelling units on fee simple rowhouse lots are also not eligible for stratification.

Proposed-Built Rental Housing

Strata conversion of existing purpose-built rental housing, except for duplex or semi-detached dwelling units, is not permitted.

Converting an Existing Building into a Stratified Lot

Converting existing and previously occupied primary dwelling units into strata lots, including that all previously occupied buildings would have to fully comply with the **current** Zoning Bylaw and **current** BC Building Code requirements in effect at the time of the conversion as per the [Strata Property Act](#).

Where a property is currently designated limited common property under an existing strata plan, the issuance of a building permit will not relieve the owner of the property from complying with any other applicable bylaws and enactments, including the *Strata Property Act*. Independent legal advice should be sought by the property owner prior to applying for the Building Permit.

If you wish to pursue a Strata Conversion for your existing property, a copy of the application form and necessary requirements can be found under the [City Subdivision page](#).

A Strata Conversion Application must be submitted to the City and comply with all necessary requirements. City of Burnaby Council will authorize such strata conversions of currently or previously occupied structures.

Prior to application, the following matters should be considered:

- Check the zoning and city requirements to ensure that the property is zoned for strata titles and understand if there are any specific requirements or restrictions.
- Engage a land surveyor, engineer or architect and lawyer to assist with the process.
- Obtain a building assessment report from a certified registered professional to assess the building's condition and the feasibility of any necessary upgrades to meet the current BC Building Code standards.

For more information regarding the stratification of an existing building contact the Planning and Development Department at 604-294-7401 or by email at Planning@Burnaby.ca.

Stratification of a New Development

Stratification of a brand-new development such as a condominium, apartment, townhouse, multiplex, duplex dwelling and even multiple single-family dwellings are done by filing and registering the Strata Plan directly with the [Land Title Office](#).

To begin you will need to engage a land surveyor to map the property and prepare a strata plan, further information on [New Strata Developments](#) can be found on the BC Government Website.

Note: Once a new dwelling has been occupied it no longer qualifies for the Strata Plan to be registered directly with the Land Title Office. A Strata Conversion Application must be submitted to the City and comply with all necessary requirements and receive Council Approval.

Further Information

For further information regarding stratification of an existing building please contact the Planning Department at 604-294-7401 or by email at Planning@Burnaby.ca