Burnaby's New Zoning Bylaw 2026

Summary of Regulatory Changes | July 2026



The City of Burnaby has completed a comprehensive rewrite of the Zoning Bylaw, modernizing, simplifying, and better unifying development regulations across the city while implementing new provincial legislation and better aligning zoning with other City plans, policies, and programs.

Purpose

As Burnaby's primary tool for regulating land use and development, the Zoning Bylaw establishes requirements for permitted uses, building height and form, siting, parking, and other aspects of development. Although the former bylaw was regularly amended in response to changing needs, legislation, and City policies, it had not undergone a comprehensive review since its original adoption in 1965. The rewrite resulted in the adoption of the Burnaby Zoning Bylaw 2026 on June 9, 2026, replacing the Burnaby Zoning Bylaw 1965 and coming into effect on July 1, 2026.

Objectives

- **Modernize and streamline regulations**
  Reduce barriers, outdated requirements, and administrative effort.
- **Reduce complexity and improve consistency**
  Standardize requirements, measurements, and calculations.
- **Improve clarity and usability**
  Use clearer language, formatting, and visuals.
- **Implement plans, policies, and legislation**
  Align zoning with key City initiatives and provincial requirements.

Process

The Zoning Bylaw Rewrite was coordinated with major City initiatives and provincial requirements, including the Burnaby 2050 Official Community Plan (OCP), new small-scale multi-unit housing requirements, transit-oriented area legislation, and changes to development financing tools. Project timing and sequencing were aligned with key milestones for these initiatives so that major components of the new zoning framework could be introduced progressively while the complete bylaw was being prepared.

Community, industry, and technical engagement occurred throughout the process, including in coordination with OCP engagement activities.

The multi-year project was implemented through four phases, each centered on a major set of zoning changes:

- **Phase 1** introduced the R1 Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing District.
- **Phase 2** established the height-based development framework and new residential and commercial districts.
- **Phase 3** introduced the remaining employment, industrial, institutional, parks, and agricultural districts.
- **Phase 4** updated the bylaw's supporting regulations, introduced Development Permit Area Guidelines, assigned new zoning districts to applicable properties, and brought all project components together in the Burnaby Zoning Bylaw 2026.

Completed Project Phasing & Major Amendments

PHASE 1
Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH)
Winter 2023 - Spring 2024

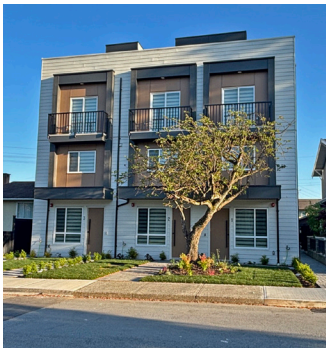
PHASE 2
Residential, Commercial & Height Framework
Summer 2024 - Spring 2025

PHASE 3
Public, Employment, Industrial & Agriculture
Spring 2025 - Winter 2025

PHASE 4
Supporting Regulations & Implementation
Winter 2025 - Spring 2026

What new zoning regulations were introduced?

The Zoning Bylaw Rewrite introduced a series of major regulatory changes across the project's four phases, progressively modernizing Burnaby's zoning framework and aligning it with the Burnaby 2050 OCP, City policy, and provincial legislation.



Phase 1 | Effective July 2024 | Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing

Phase 1 responded to new provincial requirements for small-scale multi-unit housing in Burnaby's residential neighbourhoods. Key changes included:

- **R1 District:** Consolidated the former single- and two-family districts into one new district.
- **Housing choice:** Permitted a wider range of ground-oriented housing with up to three to six units, including duplexes, multiplexes, cottage clusters, and rowhouses.
- **Family-oriented housing:** Introduced three-bedroom unit provisions and minimum outdoor amenity space requirements.
- **Simplified regulations:** Replaced complex floor area calculations with clearer height, setback, and lot coverage requirements.
- **Reduced parking:** Removed minimum parking requirements near frequent transit.



Phase 2 | Effective June 2025 | Height-Based Development Framework

Phase 2 introduced a new height-based approach for regulating multifamily residential and commercial development, guided by the Burnaby 2050 OCP. Key changes included:

- **Height-based framework:** Shifting from a floor area ratio (FAR)-based system to a framework that more directly regulates building height, form, and setbacks.
- **New zoning districts:** Introduced the R2 through R8 multifamily residential districts and the C1 and C2 commercial districts.
- **Mixed-use flexibility:** Established a new category of "secondary uses" to allow a broader mix of compatible uses within residential and commercial developments.
- **Housing and community benefits:** Aligned zoning with provincial transit-oriented area requirements and introduced inclusionary rental requirements and community benefit bonus incentives.
- **Live-work units:** Defined and introduced live-work units to the new districts.



Phase 3 | Effective March 2026 | Completion of New Zoning Districts

Phase 3 completed the suite of zoning districts needed to implement the new Burnaby 2050 OCP land use framework. Key changes included:

- **New zoning districts:** Introduced five new districts for employment (E1), industrial (I1), parks and natural areas (P1), institutional (P2), and agricultural (A1) uses.
- **Modernized land uses:** Updated permitted uses and development regulations to reflect contemporary activities, operational needs, and emerging land use trends.
- **OCP alignment:** Added zoning conditions corresponding with OCP land use overlays, strengthening the connection between zoning and the City's long-term land use vision.
- **Natural area protection:** Introduced a sub-district that limits development in environmentally significant areas, such as forests and riparian habitats, while permitting compatible activities such as trails and ecological stewardship.

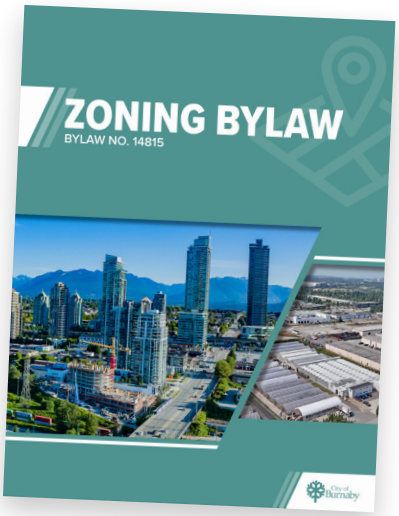
ZONING BYLAW 2026
at a glance

document length **decreased** from **276** to **139** pages

53 zoning districts reduced to **15**

Phase 4 | Effective July 2026

Updated Supplementary Regulations & New Zoning Bylaw



Phase 4 brought the work from the earlier phases together and completed the transition from Zoning Bylaw 1965 to Zoning Bylaw 2026.

New Document

The former bylaw and the major amendments introduced through Phases 1 to 3 were reorganized into a single, consolidated document. The new bylaw uses a clearer hierarchy, shorter sections, updated terminology, tables, diagrams, and other visual aids to make regulations easier to find, understand, and apply.

Key changes included:

- **Minimum building separations:** Replaced complex building separation formulas and standards with consistent minimum distances based on building height, with distinct standards for residential and commercial buildings.
- **Maximum floorplates:** Introduced floorplate limits in the R3 through R8 and C districts to better regulate building massing within the height-based framework.
- **Minimum dwelling unit sizes:** Updated requirements to align with BC Housing guidelines and establish consistent standards for rental and strata housing.
- **Permeable areas:** Established minimum permeable area requirements for most districts, including minimums for vegetated area and incentives for tree retention in the R1 District.
- **Vehicle parking:** Reduced minimum parking rates for several commercial, employment, and industrial uses to better reflect demand, location, and access to transit.
- **Loading and site access:** Introduced new loading space standards, formalized driveway requirements, and permitted tandem parking for R1 District dwellings with secondary suites.
- **Bicycle parking and car washes:** Reduced residential bicycle parking and residential car-wash stall requirements to better align with industry standards and resident demand.
- **Rental replacement:** Integrated rental replacement provisions into Phase 2 inclusionary rental requirements.
- **Use-specific regulations:** Minor updates and clarifications for various uses, such as school portables, home-based child care, lock-off units (formerly "multi-family flex-units"), building-mounted antennas, and temporary uses.
- **Citywide implementation:** Finalized the new zoning districts, reassigned affected properties, updated the Official Zoning Map, and established transition provisions for in-progress applications.

Development Permit Area Guidelines

Three new sets of Development Permit Area Guidelines were introduced as schedules to the new bylaw:

- **Schedule I: Form and Character Guidelines** provide direction for building design, landscaping, site access, and the relationship between development and the public realm.
- **Schedule II: Streamside Protection and Enhancement Guidelines** protect and enhance streams, aquatic habitats, and riparian areas during development.
- **Schedule III: Tenant Protection Guidelines** establish development permit requirements connected to the redevelopment of applicable rental housing.

Zoning regulations and development permit area guidelines are two legislatively distinct tools for implementing development requirements under the Provincial *Local Government Act*.

Form and Character Guidelines



The City's new Form and Character Guidelines are a key tool for implementing the height-based framework. These guidelines help shape the design of new development by setting expectations for building form, facades, landscaping, materials, and how buildings relate to surrounding streets and neighbourhoods. Together with the Zoning Bylaw, they support a more streamlined and design-focused approach to development that aligns with Burnaby's broader urban design and community planning goals.

Understanding Zone Reassignment

With the adoption of the Burnaby Zoning Bylaw 2026, many former floor area ratio (FAR)-based zoning districts have been repealed and replaced with new height-based zoning districts.

To fully implement the new bylaw, some properties that were previously zoned under repealed districts have been reassigned to the closest comparable new zoning district in the Burnaby Zoning Bylaw 2026, based on permitted uses, density, and building forms.

While zone reassignment has occurred in different areas throughout the city, it only applied to approximately 13% of properties citywide. This took effect with the Burnaby Zoning Bylaw 2026 on July 1, 2026.

Which properties have been reassigned new zoning?

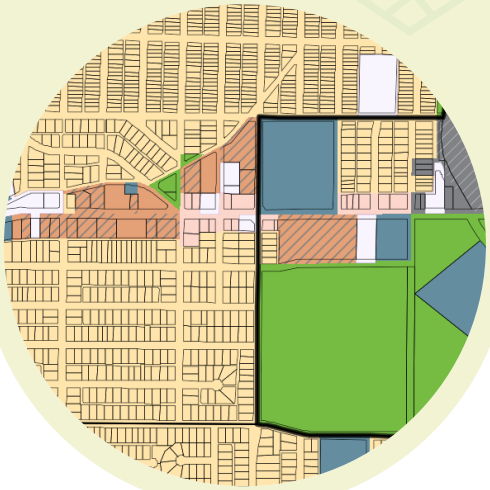
Zone reassignment has been applied citywide, but only certain types of properties have been affected. Through the adoption of the Burnaby Zoning Bylaw 2026, City Council endorsed a zone reassignment strategy based on the following key conditions:

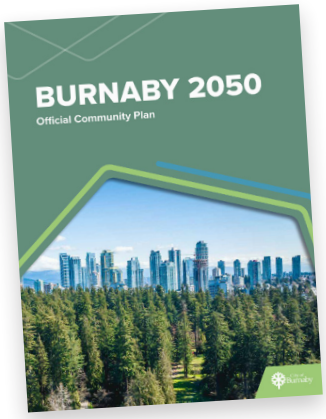
- **R1 District:** Properties with R1 District zoning have not been included in the zone reassignment strategy and remain unchanged.
- **Comprehensive Development (CD) District:** Properties previously zoned Comprehensive Development (CD) District remain zoned as CD District. This allows existing developments that are tied to complex and site-specific CD plans to remain in zoning compliance until redevelopment is proposed and considered under the Burnaby Zoning Bylaw 2026.
- **Standard zoning districts:** Properties previously assigned to standard zoning district(s) have been reassigned to the new standard zoning district(s) that most closely match their previous zoning in terms of permitted uses, current land uses, and building forms. For example, a property previously zoned Multiple Family Residential (RM3) District with a 3- or 4-storey apartment building has been reassigned to the new Low-Rise Apartment 1 (R3) District.
- **Employment and industrial lands:** Properties designated for Employment or Industrial use in both the Burnaby 2050 OCP and the Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), excluding properties zoned CD District, have been reassigned to the Employment (E1) or Industrial (I1) Districts, as applicable. Heavy industrial properties have been reassigned to the Industrial (I1a) Sub-District. This supports the preservation of Burnaby's limited employment and industrial land base and encourages the intensification of these uses.
- **Parks, open space, and natural areas:** Various primarily publicly-owned properties within designated parks or natural areas, such as forests and riparian areas, have been reassigned to the new Parks, Open Space and Natural Areas (P1) District. In cases where the need to preserve and enhance natural areas has been identified, properties have been reassigned to the P1a Sub-District.

What is my zoning?

An interactive zoning web map is available online. This tool allows you to search for a property and identify its new or reassigned zoning district, if applicable.

gis.burnaby.ca/zoningmap/





Zoning vs OCP Land Use Designation

The Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw are closely related, but they serve different purposes:

- **The Burnaby 2050 Official Community Plan (OCP)** assigns land use designations that identify the City's supported long-term land use vision for properties, looking ahead to 2050.
- **The Zoning Bylaw**, by contrast, regulates the current permitted uses, siting, height, and building forms that may be developed on a property.

In some cases, a property's current zoning district may not match its OCP land use designation. Where this occurs, a property owner may submit a development application to rezone the property to align with the supported OCP designation.

For more information, visit Burnaby.ca/ZoningBylaw