R1 Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing District

Summary of Zoning Regulations | July 2026



The R1 Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing District was carried forward to the new Burnaby Zoning Bylaw 2026. A few new elements have been added for clarity and alignment with new policy.

Background

In November 2023, the Province of BC introduced Bill 44 to increase housing supply and expand housing options for families. The legislation requires municipalities to allow 3 to 6 dwelling units (small-scale multi-unit housing or "SSMUH") on every lot previously zoned for single- or two-family use.

To meet these requirements, the City of Burnaby adopted a major amendment to the Zoning Bylaw in June 2024. This amendment replaced the City's 12 former residential "R" districts with a single new district: the R1 SSMUH District.

The City's new Zoning Bylaw 2026 carries forward the R1 SSMUH District with minor changes.

Eligible lots

R1 SSMUH District lots are eligible to build the following number of housing units as defined by the Province:

- **3 units** on lots that are up to 280 sq. m (3,014 sq. ft.)
- **4 units** on lots greater than 280 sq. m (3,014 sq. ft.)
- **6 units** on lots at least 281 sq. m (3,025 sq. ft.) and within a Frequent Transit Network Area

Frequent Transit Network Area (FTNA)

The Province defines FTNAs as all lots wholly or partly within 400 m of bus stops having 15-minute frequency, on average, between:

- 7 am and 7 pm, Monday to Friday
- 10 am and 6 pm on Saturdays and Sundays

Within FTNAs, legislation also prohibits municipalities from requiring on-site parking. The location of FTNAs can be viewed online through BurnabyMap by checking the "Frequent Transit Network Areas" layer under "Planning & Building."

Objectives

- **Support diversity and choice in housing forms**
- **Support family-oriented housing**
- **Provide simpler, more flexible regulations**
- **Deliver a greater supply of new housing**

Key changes

June 2024: Initial Adoption

- All former R District lots rezoned to R1 SSMUH District
- 3 to 6 dwelling units permitted on R1 lots
- Maximum floor area requirements removed—height, setbacks, and lot coverage define buildable area
- Ability to stratify primary dwelling units
- Fee-simple rowhousing introduced to provide alternative ownership option to stratification
- Reduced off-street parking space requirements
- New minimum lot size subdivision regulations

December 2025: Following Public Hearing

- Reduced building heights and storeys
- Height exemptions removed for rooftop patios
- Maximum lot coverage reduced by 5% to 10%
- Impervious lot area reduced by 10% for 1 to 4 units
- Minimum building setbacks increased along front streets to 4 m and along lanes to 1.5 m
- Parking requirements increased outside FTNAs

July 2026: New Burnaby Zoning Bylaw 2026

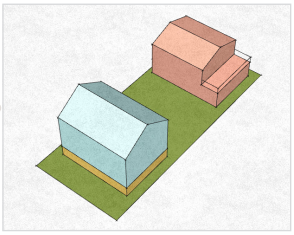
- New minimum dwelling unit sizes for studio, 2-, 3-, and 4-bedroom units
- Clarified driveway and parking siting requirements
- Impervious surface area requirements reframed as permeable surface area requirements
- New tree retention incentive for permeable areas
- Clarified floor area calculations for half storeys

What can I build?

The R1 SSMUH District supports flexibility and choice in housing form to meet the needs of diverse household compositions. Many housing types and combinations of housing types are possible, including:

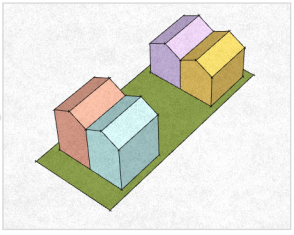
Single-family dwellings | plus secondary suite and/or laneway home





Duplexes | two sets of duplexes or one set with secondary suites

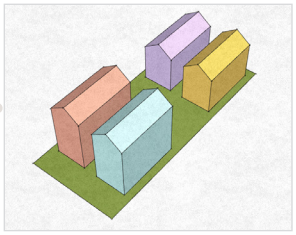




Secondary suites: Secondary suites count towards the total number of dwelling units permitted on a lot. Only one is permitted per primary dwelling unit. Secondary suites must remain registered under the same title as the primary dwelling unit within which they're contained and so cannot be stratified, as per the *BC Building Code*. See the Province's Secondary Suites Bulletin for more information.

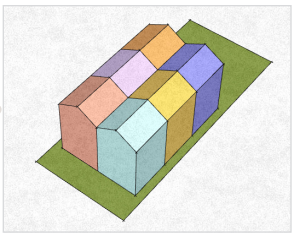
Cottage courts | multiple detached single-family dwellings on one lot





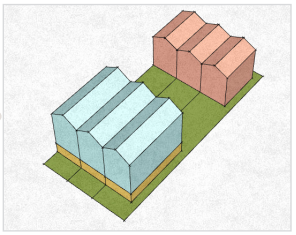
Multiplexes | 3 to 6 dwelling units in one building





Rowhouses | small lots with no side yard and up to 3 dwellings





Laneway homes: Building forms commonly referred to as laneway homes continue to be permitted, including on lots without lanes, but will be regulated the same as other single-family dwellings (or "principal buildings").

Key regulations

Maximum floor area:
» No set limit—must meet permitted height, setbacks, and lot coverage

Minimum floor area:
» Secondary Suite: 32.5 sq. m
» Studio Unit: 37 sq. m
» 1-Bedroom Unit: 56 sq. m
» 2-Bedroom Unit: 90 sq. m
» 3-Bedroom Unit: 111 sq. m
» 4-Bedroom+ Unit: 125 sq. m

Max. building height:
Front principals:
» 10 m above grade*
» 1-2 units: 2.5 storeys**
» 3-6 units: 3 storeys**
Rear principals:
» 7.5 m above grade*
» 1-6 units: 2 storeys**
*0.5 m less for flat roofs
**Inclusive of basement or cellar storey

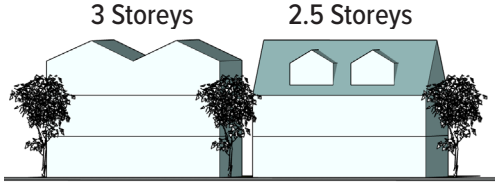
Max. lot coverage:
» 1-4 units: 40%*
» 5-6 units: 45%
» Rowhouse lots: 55%
*30% on lots over 567 sq. m with 1-2 units

Min. permeable area:
» 1-4 units: 40%
» 5-6 units: 30%
» Rowhouse lots: 30%
» Half of minimum area must be vegetated

Min. setbacks:
» Front street yard: 4 m (3 m for rowhouses)
» Side street yard: 3 m
» Lane yard: 1.5 m
» Interior side yard: 1.2 m (no min. for rowhouses)
» Interior rear yard: 3 m

Min. building separation:
» Front-to-back principals: 6 m
» Side-by-side principals: 2.4 m
» Accessory buildings: 2.4 m

Required parking:
» Outside FTNA: 1 space for first unit; 0.5 per additional unit
» Within FTNA: none required



Half Storey

The Zoning Bylaw defines a half storey as: *"a storey under a gable, hip, gambrel, or shed roof having a gross floor area not more than fifty percent of the gross floor area of the storey immediately below, and includes a covered deck that is an extension of the topmost storey."*

For more information, visit Burnaby.ca/ZoningBylaw