



To: Planning Committee **Date:** December 20, 2024
From: John Hopkins **File:** 08-4045-30-02/Vol 01
Director, Policy Planning
Re: **Referral Response: Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) – Public
Consultation Summary and Supplementary Design Review**

Staff Recommendations

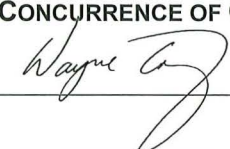


1. That Richmond Official Community Plan Bylaw 9000 Amendment Bylaw 10630, which proposes to amend conditions when a Development Permit is required for development of Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing be introduced and given first reading;
2. That Richmond Official Community Plan Bylaw 9000, Amendment Bylaw 10630 having been considered in conjunction with:
 - a. the City's Financial Plan and Capital Program; and
 - b. the Greater Vancouver Regional District Solid Waste and Liquid Waste Management Plans;

is hereby found to be consistent with said program and plans, in accordance with Section 477(3)(a) of the *Local Government Act*;

3. That Richmond Official Community Plan Bylaw 7100, Amendment Bylaw 10630, having been considered in accordance with Section 475 of the *Local Government Act* and the City's Official Community Plan Bylaw Preparation Consultation Policy 5043, is hereby found not to require further consultation; and
4. That Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 10631, to clarify provisions for development of Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing be introduced and given first, second and third reading.

John Hopkins
Director, Policy Planning
(604-276-4279)

Att. 5

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Building Approvals Development Applications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO 

Staff Report

Origin

On June 24, 2024, Council amended zoning for almost 27,000 single-family and duplex lots throughout the City to permit Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) to comply with the Province's Bill 44 legislation. The legislation intends to create more housing supply in neighbourhoods characterized by single-family and duplex dwellings. Any local government that failed to comply with provincial SSMUH requirements by June 30, 2024 risked the Province enacting bylaws on the jurisdiction's behalf.

To ensure the bylaw amendments adopted in June 2024 will result in SSMUH development that is well suited to the Richmond context, staff were directed to undertake public consultation and monitor implementation of the bylaw amendments, and report back to Council.

This report responds to the following referral from the June 24, 2024 Council meeting:

That a review of the Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing zoning district bylaws and associated zoning bylaw amendments be conducted after 6 months.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #1 Proactive in Stakeholder and Civic Engagement:

Proactive stakeholder and civic engagement to foster understanding and involvement and advance Richmond's interests.

1.3 Increase the reach of communication and engagement efforts to connect with Richmond's diverse community.

1.4 Leverage a variety of approaches to make civic engagement and participation easy and accessible.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #2 Strategic and Sustainable Community Growth:

Strategic and sustainable growth that supports long-term community needs and a well-planned and prosperous city.

2.2 Develop and implement innovative and proactive solutions that encourage a range of housing options and prioritize affordability.

Background

The amendment bylaws adopted by Council in June 2024 to permit SSMUH development include the following:

- a new zoning district, Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (RSM zone), and amendments to duplex zones to permit three (3) to six (6) units on property in eligible areas conditional to property size and location criteria; and

- removing residential parking minimums for development on sites where up to six (6) units are permitted (e.g., areas within 400 m of a frequent transit service bus stop that provides bus service every 15 minutes during the day).

It takes time for land use regulation changes to be reflected in construction patterns. While 42 building permit applications for new development on a RSM zoned property are being reviewed, only ten (10) propose to construct three (3) or more units on a lot. The remaining 32 applications propose to construct less than three (3) units (i.e., ten [10] single-family dwellings without a secondary suite, one [1] single-family dwelling with a coach house, 18 single-family dwellings with a secondary suite and three [3] duplex developments). Rather than indicating limited interest in SSMUH development, the data may reflect the short duration of time that has passed since the RSM zone was introduced in June 2024 (i.e., project planning, land acquisition and design development can take several months). To ensure the RSM zone provides a practicable framework for SSMUH development and to ensure SSMUH development is well suited to the Richmond context, this report includes suggestions to modify provisions in the RSM zone and supporting bylaws based on the outcome of public consultation and detailed design review.

This report also identifies elements that are being further reviewed in the context of the Official Community Plan (OCP) update, which broadly considers opportunities to affect housing affordability, increase housing choice, and build complete communities. Parking requirements for smaller lots, increasing density for SSMUH development on larger lots, and simplifying subdivision guidelines are being further reviewed.

Analysis

Public Consultation

City staff carried out consultation with the public between July and November 2024. Public consultation included four (4) open houses and two (2) Builder and Designer Breakfast sessions.

In July 2024, public open houses were held at community centres located in different geographic areas of the City (i.e., Steveston, Hamilton, South Arm and Thompson) and were attended by almost 1,800 residents. Generally, those who attended the public open houses were interested in learning more about what can be built on a RSM zoned lot, the building permit process, and associated timelines and costs. LetsTalkRichmond.ca was used to share information and collect feedback during the July consultation. Approximately 4,240 registered users accessed the website and almost 300 provided responses to the survey and/or comments. Attachment 1 includes a summary of the responses received and a copy of the survey questions.

The Builder and Designer Breakfast format is regularly used to provide information that affects the small building community. A Builder's Breakfast was hosted in July and again in November. Invitations were sent to approximately 200 individuals and sessions were attended by approximately 96 and 65 builders and designers in July and November respectively. The first session introduced and shared information about the new RSM zone and associated bylaw amendments. The second session summarized the RSM zone design elements being re-evaluated and British Columbia Building Code requirements that affect SSMUH construction, as well as possible design responses. In addition, residential builders and designers were invited to share

their perspectives on local industry interest in SSMUH development by completing a LetsTalkRichmond.ca survey that was distributed in advance of the meeting. The survey questions distributed to builders and designers in advance of the November Builder's Breakfast are included in Attachment 2, which also includes a summary of the responses received.

Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Resident Profile

Staff engaged a real estate consultant to determine potential market interest in SSMUH in Richmond neighbourhoods. The analysis found that almost 35 percent of Richmond households may be interested in residing in SSMUH, including families with children, multi-generational households and households that are downsizing. This resident profile prefers ground-oriented dwellings, particularly if the dwelling units are more affordable than typical Richmond townhouses, and values SSMUH's location in established low density neighbourhoods with nearby schools and parks. These preferences informed the RSM zone design review and the recommendations that follow.

Standardized Housing Designs

Since the introduction of Bill 44, which mandated zoning changes to permit SSMUH development, various government and non-government organizations have undertaken work aimed at improving housing delivery with standard designs. In September 2024, the Province of British Columbia published its "Standardized Housing Designs Catalogue", which is intended to provide the public with customizable residential building designs to build SSMUH. While the catalogue provides the public with a conceptual design tool, the models provide few options for smaller lots (e.g., lots requiring stacked units) or development with more than four (4) units. Further, the designs generally provide little or no indoor parking and the orientation of multiple-unit arrangements raises concerns regarding overlook impacts on neighbours. While the provincial catalogue models do not provide a practical Richmond response to facilitate SSMUH development regarding design or responsiveness to local market demands, staff will continue to review information that is distributed by the Province.

RSM Zone Design Review

To ensure the RSM zone establishes a framework for SSMUH development that can practicably be used by local builders and designers, supplementary design review was undertaken. The findings of the design review, together with feedback from the public, suggest a series of minor amendments to the RSM zone, as well as items for future review.

Design Review: Recommended Minor Bylaw Amendments

- 1. Remove the Development Permit (DP) Requirement for Construction on an Irregular-Shape Lot and for Construction of a Detached Single-Storey Building that Encroaches into the Rear Yard Setback**

The Province's June deadline to amend zoning to permit SSMUH development did not allow staff adequate time to complete detailed design studies for all SSMUH development scenarios. Therefore, on an interim basis, Development Permit (DP) requirements were introduced for SSMUH development on irregular-shape lots (i.e., not rectangular) and SSMUH development

involving a building that encroaches into the rear yard. The outcome of the design review and feedback received from the public suggest the following changes:

- *Removing the DP requirement for SSMUH development on an irregular-shape lot.* Supplementary design review finds that SSMUH development on an irregular-shape lot does not result in greater impacts on adjacencies compared to development on a regular-shape lot. To assist the public to determine required setbacks on an irregular-shape lot, an information bulletin was drafted and is available on the City’s website.
- *Removing the DP requirement for a detached single-storey building that encroaches into the rear yard setback (e.g., granny flat type development).* The zoning bylaw specifies location requirements for a detached building that encroaches into the rear yard setback, including the size of the outdoor space between the front and rear buildings (i.e., to replace the outdoor space displaced by the building encroachment). The design review finds that these provisions are adequate to ensure that a building with a maximum height of 5 m (16 ft.) and one storey would have negligible impacts on adjacencies, including concerns related to privacy. These location and height specifications also apply to a prefabricated building (e.g., backyard studio kit).

The design review finds that construction of SSMUH is not fundamentally affected by lot geometry and that possible impacts on adjacencies can be addressed by the siting and height specifications embedded in the zoning bylaw (i.e., single-storey and 5 m [16 ft.] maximum height). Therefore, it is suggested that the DP requirement is removed for these conditions. Retaining the DP requirement for a building that is two storeys and encroaches into the rear yard setback is recommended to facilitate supplementary design review to address overlook and privacy concerns.

2. Increase Permitted Building Height from 9 m (30 ft.) to 10 m (33 ft.)

The maximum building height permitted in the RSM zone is 9 m (30 ft.). The permitted height and applicable “residential vertical lot width envelope” and “half-storey” specifications are generally consistent with the single-family zoning replaced by the RSM zone. These conditions regulate massing to respect neighbourhood character. Changes are suggested to improve the livability of the attic half-storey and to introduce more opportunity to vary roof shapes (Attachment 3).

Design review and feedback received through the consultation process suggest that the maximum 9 m (30 ft.) height permitted by the RSM zone results in the following outcomes:

- floor to ceiling heights (2.75 m [9 ft.]) that are less than the current market preference (3 m [10 ft.]);
- limited functional floor area in the attic half-storey (e.g., low ceilings); and
- reliance on dormers to make the attic half-storey livable, which may increase roof massing and contribute to a blocky appearance.

Increasing the permitted height from 9 m (30 ft.) to 10 m (33 ft.), alongside supporting amendments, is recommended. The changes would improve livability in the attic half-storey without impacting streetscape character or adjacencies (e.g., privacy). In addition, modestly increasing the permitted building height expands the construction options that are available to

meet British Columbia Energy Step Code requirements (e.g., additional permitted height may encourage construction of a crawl space, which increases mechanical options to heat the home and improves system efficiency, and results in fewer required upgrades to the building envelope to meet energy efficiency targets). The suggested supporting amendments include the following:

- Amending the “residential vertical lot width envelope” (i.e., amend the vertical point from which the roof slopes) in accordance with the increase in building height from 9 m (30 ft.) to 10 m (33 ft.) and clarifying the method used to calculate building height.
- Permitting a dormer to project to the exterior face of a building’s side wall when the space accommodates a stairway to the attic half-storey. The building projection area is limited to the space that accommodates a stairway that continues to the attic half-storey and would improve design efficiencies, simplify the building envelope (e.g., to improve energy efficiency) and contribute to more variety in roof shapes.
- Amending the stairway exemption, to align with the exemption that applies for single-family and townhouse zoned properties (i.e., up to 10 m² (108 ft²) is exempted for a single-family dwelling and for individual townhouse units). The impact would be limited by provisions in the RSM zone that set the maximum permitted three dimensional building envelope.
- Permitting a street-fronting balcony at the attic half-storey to improve livability and street fronting character. Further, a balcony may provide an emergency exit, as required by the British Columbia Building Code for certain types of multi-family development.

Feedback from consultation with the public suggests some support to permit additional building height to improve habitable space in the attic half-storey, which would contribute towards more varied roofs. Builders and designers advise additional building height and the alignment of stairway exclusions with those applied to single-family houses and townhouses is necessary to realize SSMUH development. Based on further design review and feedback from the community, changes to building height and associated provisions are suggested.

3. Administrative Amendments

A number of administrative updates are recommended to improve and clarify conditions that apply to SSMUH development, and to reflect findings from the design review and comments from the public. The suggested amendments include the following:

- Clarifying that a DP is not required for a detached, single-storey garage with lane access when associated with development of a single-family dwelling (with or without a secondary suite). Merging the traditional single-family zones into the RSM zone resulted in a garage located within the rear yard setback being subject to the DP requirement, whereas a DP was not required prior to June 2024. The RSM zone intends to preserve the option to construct a single-family dwelling (with or without a secondary suite), including the option to construct a detached garage that is accessed from a lane.
- Clarifying that where two (2) lots share a driveway, the maximum permitted width of the driveway is 6 m (20 ft.). The amendment is suggested to encourage developers of SSMUH developments on abutting lots to share a driveway (secured via registration of a cross access agreement prior to Building Permit issuance) to maximize opportunities for on-site landscaping, on-street parking and frontage improvements.

- Clarifying rear yard setback requirements when a building (e.g., detached garage), vehicle parking and/or vehicle access is located within the setback. The amendment is suggested to clarify the point from which the setback will be measured to ensure the required rear yard setback is preserved to provide open space and opportunities for tree preservation.
- Clarifying that, with respect to form and character, a secondary suite shall be treated like any other SSMUH dwelling unit and is not required to be concealed from view (e.g., entry doors may be visible from the street).
- Clarifying that fence height regulations for SSMUH development are consistent with those applied to single-family zoning.
- Clarifying that floor area exclusions apply to space in the eaves of the attic half-storey that are inaccessible or used solely for mechanical equipment or storage purposes, provided that they are separated from the habitable portion of the attic half-storey with a wall or similar structure and have a ceiling height of less than 1.8 m (6 ft.).
- Clarifying that a DP is required for SSMUH development on a property that is located within the Arterial Road Land Use Policy Area, unless development includes no more than two (2) units with the second unit being constructed as a secondary suite (as defined by the BC Building Code). The clarification is required to align conditions for SSMUH development with the longstanding requirement that duplex, triplex and other multi-family development on land within the Arterial Road Land Use Policy Area is required to secure a DP.
- Clarifying that longstanding Zoning Bylaw provisions that support the rezoning and subdivision of a property that is developed in a duplex arrangement are not applicable to RSM zoned lots. The RSM zone permits development of duplex-like units; therefore, construction of more duplex type housing is anticipated. Simultaneously, the RSM zone intends to preserve the existing subdivision pattern and does not encourage further subdivision. The suggested amendment only clarifies subdivision requirements for RSM zoned property and does not impact properties that are not zoned RSM.

Design Review: Further Analysis

Feedback from the public, builders, and designers suggested further consideration should be given to parking configurations (e.g., on smaller lots), increasing permitted building density (e.g., on larger lots), and subdivision (e.g., rezoning to permit two-lot splits). These items will be further considered alongside complimentary analysis that is being undertaken as part of the OCP update, which broadly considers opportunities to affect housing affordability, increase housing choice, and build complete communities.

1. Parking on Smaller Lots

For lots less than 12 m (40 ft.) wide that are accessed from a road (not a lane), the RSM zone limits driveway width to 3 m (10 ft.). The RSM zone restricts driveway widths for smaller lots to minimize the visual impact of garages/driveways on the streetscape (e.g., prominent garage and absence of front door connection to the street), reduce interruption at the sidewalk/boulevard, and increase opportunity for on-street parking. As a result, for smaller lots, the number of on-site parking spaces is limited to two (2) spaces in a tandem arrangement (e.g., one garage and one driveway parking space, both of which would typically be assigned to one (1)

dwelling unit). Feedback from builders and designers suggests SSMUH development is viable only if each strata unit has a dedicated parking space; therefore, the prescribed maximum driveway widths may limit the likelihood of stratification and development may resemble a single-family dwelling with a secondary suite. Permitting a wider driveway on smaller lots will be further analyzed to establish the minimum lot width required to meet development objectives (e.g., street-fronting unit entries, mitigating prominent garages and maximizing live landscaping opportunities).

2. Increasing Density on Larger Lots to Encourage More Housing Choice

The RSM zone preserves the variable density framework used for single-family development, with a modest increase in density (i.e., 0.6 floor area ratio [FAR] for the first 464.5 m² (5,000 ft²) of lot area and 0.3 FAR applied to the balance, together with “flex space” that may be used for garage and/or habitable space). The permitted floor area influences the type of building(s) that are anticipated to be constructed on RSM zoned properties. Attachment 4 includes models for the three (3) housing types discussed in the subsequent section.

The design review suggests the application of a variable density framework by the RSM zone may limit the diversity of housing types that will be constructed. A review of lot sizes and resulting floor area suggests that construction of “Compact SSMUH” (e.g., front/back or stacked duplex-like units) and “Semi-Detached SSMUH” (e.g., conventional duplex-like two (2) unit dwellings, with or without secondary suites) may be the common types of SSMUH, particularly on small and medium-sized lots respectively. Feedback received from builders, designers and some property owners advocates for additional floor area (e.g., replace variable with fixed density), particularly for large lots, which may facilitate “Side-by-Side SSMUH” (e.g., townhouse-like units) if additional density is permitted for larger lots. Changes to the density framework may provide an opportunity to increase housing choice by encouraging a preferred relationship between parcel size and housing type and will be further analyzed (e.g., structuring the density framework to encourage smaller “Side-by-Side SSMUH” townhouse-like units that are more affordable than a large “Semi-Detached SSMUH” duplex-type unit or a standard Richmond townhouse unit).

3. Subdivision and Lot Size Policy

The RSM zone preserves the existing property subdivision pattern and does not encourage further subdivision. While the RSM zone simplified administration and regulations related to subdivision by grouping lots into four sub-zones based on lot sizes that reflect pre-existing subdivision conditions (i.e., small, medium, large and extra-large), neither the Zoning Bylaw nor OCP provide guidance regarding the conditions when rezoning to facilitate subdivision may be considered (e.g., to rezone from RSM/L to RSM/S). For single-family lots, this guidance has generally been provided by the Lot Size Policy. While the Lot Size Policy includes 56 separate policy areas, large areas of the city are not subject to the policy, which results in unclear conditions for consideration of subdivision. Subdivision criteria for RSM zoned properties and remaining single-family zoned properties will be reviewed with an intention to simplify and consolidate subdivision guidelines in one map.

Official Community Plan (OCP) Consultation

Attachment 5 includes a summary of consultation with respect to the *Local Government Act* and the City's OCP Bylaw Preparation Consultation Policy No. 5043 requirements. Should Council endorse the OCP amendment bylaw by granting first reading, the bylaw will be forwarded to the next Public Hearing. A Public Hearing notice will be posted on the City's website.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

In June 2024, to comply with provincial legislation, Council amended zoning for almost 27,000 single-family and duplex lots to permit Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) development. To ensure the bylaw amendments will result in SSMUH development that is responsive to the Richmond context, staff were directed to undertake public consultation and monitor implementation of the bylaw amendments.

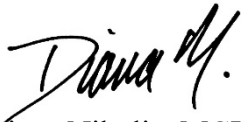
While few building permit applications to construct SSMUH have been submitted to date, feedback from the public, builders and designers suggests strong interest in SSMUH development. Public consultation included four (4) open houses that were attended by almost 1,800 residents and two (2) Builder and Designer Breakfasts. Information was shared and feedback was collected using LetsTalkRichmond.ca. Feedback received from the public, builders and designers informed the design review.

The bylaw amendments (Bylaw 10630, 10631) attached to this report reflect the feedback that was received and findings from the design review. The following changes are suggested to simplify terms for SSMUH construction and improve livability of SSMUH:

- Remove the Development Permit (DP) requirement for SSMUH development on an irregular-shape lot.
- Remove the DP requirement for construction of a building that encroaches into the rear yard, provided the building is limited to a single-storey and complies with the location and other criteria included in the zoning bylaw.
- Increase permitted building height from 9 m (30 ft.) to 10 m (33 ft.) and introduce associated provisions to improve habitable space in the attic half-storey, contribute towards attractive streetscapes and varied roof shapes, and increase options to meet BC Energy Step Code requirements.
- Undertake administrative changes to clarify conditions related to shared driveway width, building requirements within the rear yard setback, design requirements for a secondary suite, fence heights, floor area calculations for stairs and the eaves of attic half-storey, DP requirements within the Arterial Road Land Use Policy Area, and subdivision as it relates to duplex-type development on RSM zoned lots.

Staff will continue to review parking requirements for smaller lots, increasing density for SSMUH development on larger lots, and simplifying subdivision guidelines.

It is recommended that Richmond Official Community Plan Bylaw 9000, Amendment Bylaw 10630, be introduced and giving first reading, and Richmond Zoning Bylaw No. 8500, Amendment Bylaw 10631, be introduced and given first, second and third reading.



Diana Nikolic, MCIP
Program Manager, Policy Planning
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Suzanne Carter-Huffman
Program Manager, Urban Design
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DN:cas

- Att. 1: July 2024 Public Open Houses Summary and Survey Questions
- 2: November 2024 Builder and Designer Breakfast Summary and Survey Questions
- 3: Image: Suggested Building Height Changes
- 4: Image: Common SSMUH Housing Type Examples
- 5: OCP Consultation Policy and Summary of Consultation with Key Stakeholders

Common themes expressed by the public during the public open houses include the following:

- Clarification about the new RSM zone, associated regulations and specifically how many units they could build on their lot.
- Concerns expressed about development and servicing related costs when constructing Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH).
- Concerns expressed with the Provincial regulations, specifically related to affordability, change in neighbourhood character, increase in traffic and the need for regulating parking in neighbourhoods, impact to servicing, community amenities and schools, and the potential increase to property taxes.
- Many residents appreciated Richmond's approach (e.g., FAR, height, setbacks relatively the same) and felt it helped mitigate the concerns noted above.
- Some residents appreciated that the property owner has the choice to build strata or rental.
- Some support for the extension to the compliance deadline for the Steveston townsite.

Summary of survey responses:

- Survey responses did not indicate clear preferences related to density and roof forms.
- There was some support to explore building height greater than 9 m (30 ft.).
- Survey responses indicate a preference to both preserve yards and setbacks while also accommodating more on-site parking.

Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing in Richmond



How can we improve Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing?

The magnitude of change created by the Province's housing legislation and the associated tight timelines are unprecedented and prevented early public consultation. It is important to hear what you like and how Richmond's **Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing regulations** can be improved.

Please log in to [LetsTalkRichmond.ca](https://lets-talk-richmond.ca) to share feedback on **density, height, roofs, front and rear yards, and parking.**

1. Let's Talk about Density: *What do you prefer?*

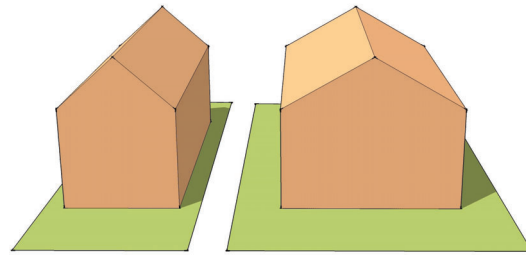
Under the **Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (RSM) zone**, developments containing 3, 4, 5 or 6 units are permitted the following density (i.e., floor area):

- 0.6 FAR for up to 464.5 m² (5,000 ft²) of lot area, plus 0.3 FAR for any additional lot area; and
- 80 m² (861 ft²) of "flex space" for use as parking garage and/or living space.

This approach results in **Variable Density** that **decreases as lot size increases.**

- This approach would reduce building sizes on larger lots and, as a result, Small-Scale Multi-Unit housing units may be compact on all lots.

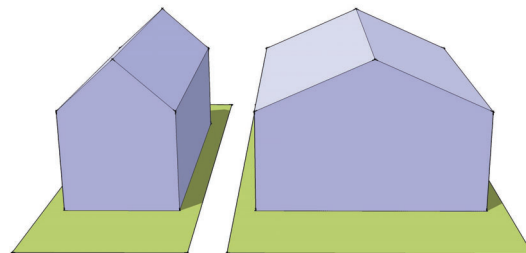
Variable Density



Lot: 3,000 ft²
Building: 2,661 ft²

Lot: 6,000 ft²
Building: 4,160 ft²

Fixed Density



Lot: 3,000 ft²
Building: 2,661 ft²

Lot: 6,000 ft²
Building: 5,322 ft²

An alternative approach is **Fixed Density** that stays the **same regardless of lot size.**

- This would permit larger buildings on larger lots and more compact units on smaller lots

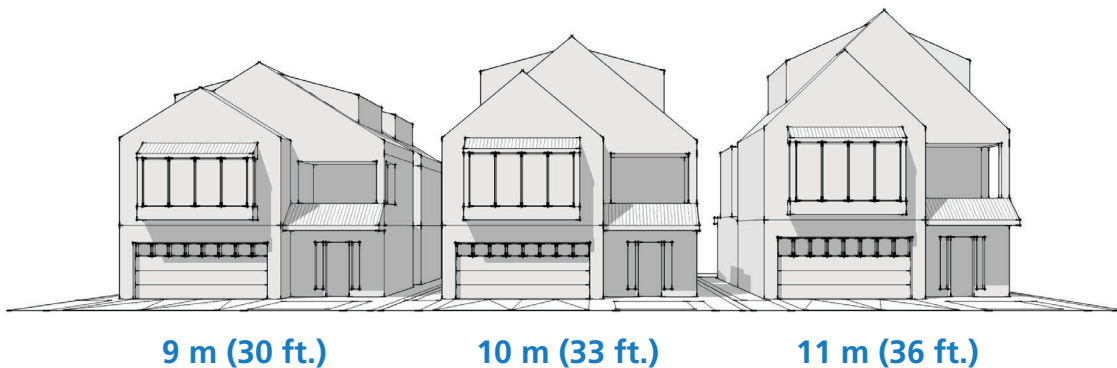
Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing in Richmond



2. Let's Talk about Height: *What do you prefer?*

The new **Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (RSM) zone** permits a maximum height of 9 m (30 ft.) and 2 ½ storeys, which is the same height Richmond permits for single-family houses. The RSM zone includes minor changes that will improve use of the attic (“half-storey”) for living space; **however**, a maximum building height of:

- **9 m (30 ft.)** will restrict ceiling heights to 2.4 m (8 ft.) and limit design flexibility;
- **10 m (33 ft.)** (i.e., 1 m (3 ft.) increase) would improve design flexibility and use of the attic “half-storey” for living space without appreciably changing the appearance; or
- **11 m (36 ft.)** (i.e., 2 m (6 ft.) increase) could keep a house-like appearance (e.g., sloped roof), while allowing for 3 full storeys, which would increase living space without reducing yard size or increasing impacts on existing trees.



3. Let's Talk about Roofs: *What do you prefer?*

The new **Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (RSM) zone** encourages sloped roof forms like Richmond’s single-family houses.

Sloped roofs are encouraged because they make buildings appear less bulky (due to their smaller top), add visual interest and reduce shading onto yards.

Flat roofs are permitted, but they are limited to 2 storeys, while sloped roofs can be 2 storeys plus living space in the attic “half-storey”.

Other roof options can add variety and contribute to neighbourhood character.



Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing in Richmond

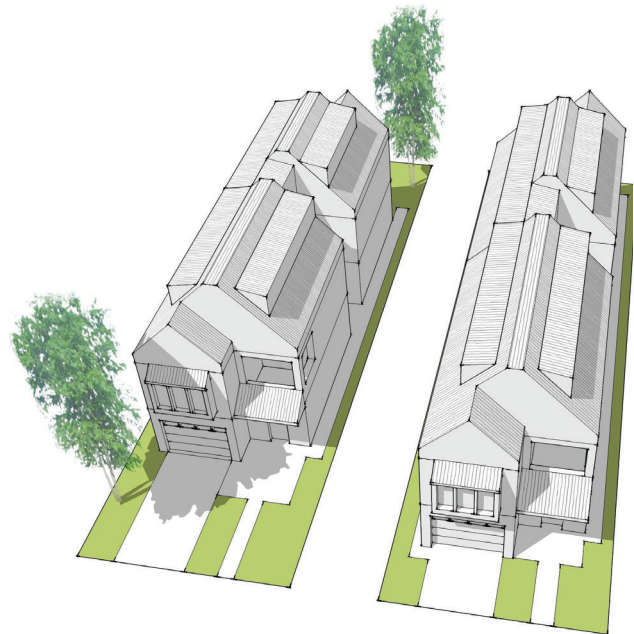


4. Let's Talk about Front & Rear Yards: *What do you prefer?*

The new **Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (RSM) zone** requires developments to provide 6 m (20 ft.) deep front and rear yards. If a building is constructed in the rear yard (e.g., garden suite or coach house), a 6 m (20 ft.) deep landscaped space must be provided between the front and rear buildings.

Large yards and landscaped spaces are important for neighbourhood character recreation, tree preservation, plants and stormwater management.

However, if these outdoor areas were smaller, more space would be available to **expand the building footprint and increase indoor uses** (i.e., living space or parking).



6 m (20 ft.) front and rear yards

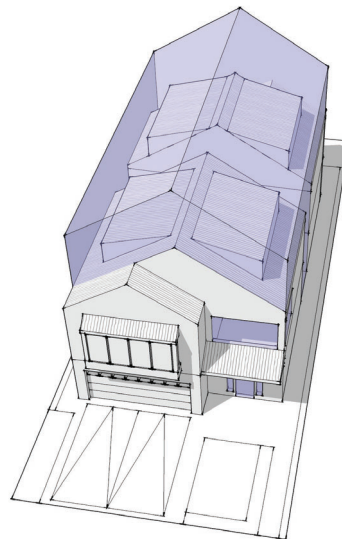
3 m (10 ft.) front and rear yards

5. Let's Talk about Parking: *What do you prefer?*

As recommended by the Province, the City's new **Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (RSM) zone reduces on-site parking requirements** (i.e., no parking spaces are required near frequent transit service and 0.5 to 1.0 space/unit is required elsewhere).

Developers have the option to provide more parking than required, but this could require:

- **Increasing building size** to allow for more indoor parking garages; or
- **Reducing landscaping** in front and/or rear yards to expand outdoor parking.



Increasing height can provide more parking at ground level

November 2024 Builder and Designer Breakfast Summary and Survey Questions

The following themes were frequently expressed during consultation with builders and designers and have informed the design review:

- Conventional single detached, duplex and townhouse type buildings (i.e., side by side units) are preferred to stacked units.
- Three (3) bedroom and greater than three (3) bedroom strata units are preferred.
- To achieve desired floor to ceiling heights and to improve access and use of the attic half-storey, additional height and provisions for access stairways are required.
- Builders advise that more density, particularly on larger lots, is required to make larger duplex and townhouse-like development viable.
- Requiring a Development Permit for a second building (e.g., granny flat, coach house type building) discourages their construction.
- Stratification of units is preferred; however, to be marketable, every strata unit must have one to two parking spaces (including one parking space in a garage).
- Narrow driveways on small lots and side driveways on larger lots are disliked by builders and designers.

Summary of survey responses (25 responses received):

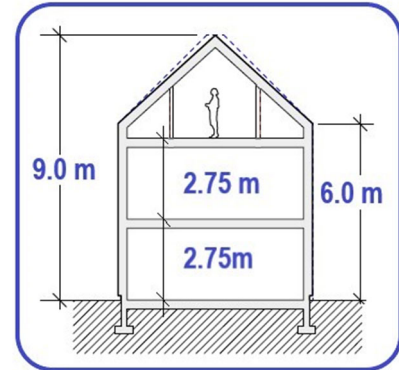
- Survey responses indicate strong interest in SSMUH development. Almost 90% of respondents are interested in building SSMUH and more than half are currently designing or building SSMUH development.
- Survey responses indicate duplex type (with or without a secondary suite) and multi-plex (i.e., 3 or more units in a stacked arrangement) forms of SSMUH development are preferred. However, this feedback conflicts with comments from individuals expressing preference for side-by-side units (townhouse type arrangement), which may be easier to build.
- Survey responses indicate there is low interest in conversion or infill SSMUH development (i.e., new SSMUH development is preferred).
- On-site parking for the exclusive use of each strata unit and 2.7 m (9 ft.), or greater, ceiling height are priority features.

Image: Suggested Building Height Changes

Results from the public survey in July 2024 indicate some support to explore building height greater than 9 m (30 ft.). Feedback received from builders and designers encourage increased building height to improve the livability of the attic half-storey.

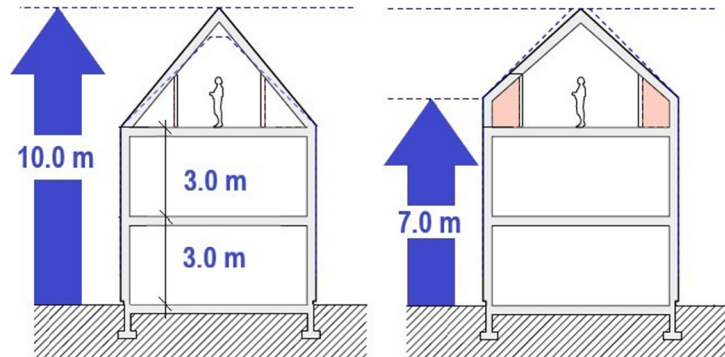
RSM permits a maximum height of 9.0 m (30 ft.) and 2½ storeys, as defined by a “residential vertical lot width envelope” that slopes inward at 45° above 6.0 m (20 ft.). This arrangement:

- limits floor-to-floor height to 2.75 m (9 ft.), which is less than the market preference for 3.0 m (10 ft.);
- limits the functionality of the attic half-storey; and
- limits roof options.



Increasing building height to 10 m (33 ft.) and raising the maximum side wall height from 6.0 m (20 ft.) to 7 m (23 ft.) would:

- provide for more desirable floor-to-floor heights;
- improve the livability of the attic half-storey; and
- have negligible impact on adjacencies.



Livability and efficiency of the attic half-storey can be further improved (without impacts on neighbours) by allowing for:

- stair dormer to align with the exterior side wall; and
- street-fronting balconies.

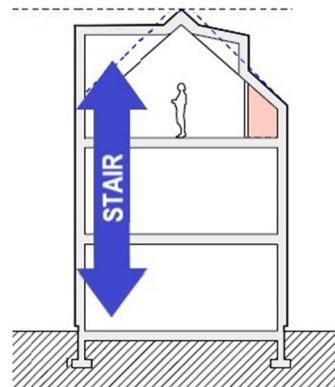


Image: Common SSMUH Housing Type Examples

Compact

- **Duplex-like** units in a front-to-back or stacked arrangement
- 1-2 strata units plus 1-2 rental units per lot
- 1+ parking spaces per strata unit
- Generally small and medium lots



Semi-Detached

- **Duplex-like** units
- 2 strata units plus 1-2 rental units per lot
- 1+ parking spaces per strata unit
- Generally medium and large lots



Side-by-Side

- **Townhouse-like** units
- 4 strata units per lot
- 1+ parking spaces per strata unit
- Large lots



Stakeholder	Referral Comment (No Referral necessary)
Agricultural Land Commission	No referral necessary because the Land Commission is not affected.
Richmond School Board	No referral necessary because the proposed OCP amendment does not increase buildable residential floor area, number of dwelling units, or number of households with school aged children. (See below)
Board of Metro Vancouver	No referral necessary because the Regional District is not affected.
Councils of adjacent Municipalities	No referral necessary because adjacent municipalities are not affected.
First Nations (e.g., Sto:lo, Tsawwassen & Musqueam)	No referral necessary because First Nations are not affected.
TransLink	No referral necessary because the proposed amendment will not result in road network changes.
Vancouver Port Authority & Steveston Harbour Authority	No referral necessary because the port is not affected.
Vancouver International Airport Authority (Federal Agency)	No referral necessary because the proposed amendment does not affect Transport Canada's maximum permitted building height or the OCP Aircraft Noise Sensitive Development (ANSND) policy.
Richmond Coastal Health Authority	No referral necessary because the Health Authority is not affected.
Community Groups & Neighbours	No referral necessary, but the public will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed amendment at the Public Hearing.
All relevant Federal & Provincial Government Agencies	No referral necessary because Federal and Provincial Government Agencies are not affected.



Richmond Official Community Plan Bylaw 9000
Amendment Bylaw 10630
(Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing)

The Council of the City of Richmond, in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

- 1. Richmond Official Community Plan Bylaw 9000, as amended, is further amended in Section 14.0 Development Permit Guidelines by:
1.1. In Section 14.1.5, replacing the first bullet with the following:
"- intensive residential areas where small-scale multi-unit housing development is permitted and involves:
- a building greater than one storey or 5.0 m (16.4 ft.) in height that is located, in whole or in part, within 6.0 m (19.7 ft.) of a rear lot line; or
- land along arterial roads within the Arterial Road Land Use Policy Area, excluding development of a lot with only one dwelling unit or two dwelling units where one dwelling unit is a secondary suite;"
1.2. In Section 14.1.6.1, replacing the sixth bullet with the following:
"- new buildings or building additions of 100 m2 (1,076.4 ft2) or less, excluding development involving small-scale multi-unit housing."
2. This Bylaw may be cited as "Richmond Official Community Plan Bylaw 9000, Amendment Bylaw 10630".

FIRST READING

PUBLIC HEARING

SECOND READING

THIRD READING

ADOPTED

Five horizontal lines for signature or date entry.

CITY OF RICHMOND
APPROVED by JH
APPROVED by Manager or Solicitor BRB

MAYOR

CORPORATE OFFICER



**Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500
Amendment Bylaw 10631
(Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing)**

The Council of the City of Richmond, in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

1. Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, as amended, is further amended in Section 2.3 Applications for RS Zones by replacing Section 2.3.7a) with the following:
 - “a) the land is the **site** of a legal **two-unit housing unit** and is intended to be subdivided into no more than **two single detached housing lots** [which for clarity does not include land zoned **Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (RSM/S, RSM/M, RSM/L, RSM/XL)**];”.
2. Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, as amended, is further amended in Section 3.4 Use and Term Definitions by:
 - 2.1. In the definition of storey, half (½), for housing, small-scale multi-unit:
 - 2.1.1. Replacing bullet “a)” with the following:
 - “a) no **balcony** or deck is permitted at a **storey, half (½)**, except that a recessed deck (i.e., with a roof above and solid walls on either side) is permitted where the deck is entirely located within 12.0 m of a public **road** and only opens towards that public **road**.”
 - 2.1.2. Inserting a new bullet following “e)iii)” as follows:
 - “f) Notwithstanding section e), one gable end dormer per **dwelling unit** is not required to be set back from a **front yard, rear yard, exterior side yard** or **interior side yard** provided that:
 - i) the dormer accommodates interior stair access to the **storey, half (½)**;
 - ii) the dormer roof slope is a minimum of 12:12;
 - iii) the dormer roof ridge is no higher than 0.5 m below the roof ridge of the main roof; and
 - iv) the lowest point of the dormer’s sloping roof terminates on or below the **building’s** main roof.”

3. Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, as amended, is further amended in Section 4.3A Calculation of Density in Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Zones by:

3.1. In Section 4.3A.1, inserting a new section ahead of 4.3A.1a) as follows and renumbering the subsequent sections accordingly:

- “a) 10.0 m² of **floor area** per **dwelling unit**, which must be used exclusively for a maximum of one interior staircase per **dwelling unit**, which staircase shall connect at least two **storeys** or may connect three **storeys** if the staircase is in a stacked arrangement;
- b) Any portion of **floor area** at a **storey, half (½)** that is inaccessible or used only for storage or mechanical equipment purposes, has a **ceiling height** less than 1.8 m, and is demised from the **habitable space** at the **storey, half (½)** by way of a wall or built-in storage (e.g., closet or bookcases);”.

3.2. Replacing Section 4.3A.2 with the following:

“4.3A.2 Any portion of **floor area** in a **principal building** with a **ceiling height** which exceeds 5.0 m shall be considered to comprise two floors and shall be measured as such for the purposes of calculating **density** in all **residential zones** and **site specific zones** that permit **small-scale multi-unit housing**.”

4. Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, as amended, is further amended in Section 4.8A Projections into Yards in Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Zones by replacing Section 4.8A.9 as follows:

“4.8A.9 A **building** may be located within the **rear yard**, in whole or in part, where:

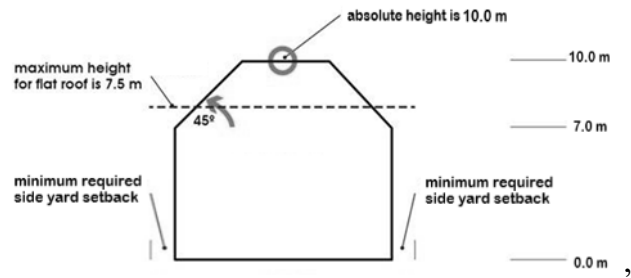
- a) the **building** is a detached **accessory building** with a **floor area** of 10.0 m² or less; or
- b) the **building** is one of two **buildings** on the **lot** with a **floor area** greater than 10.0 m² and the front **building** or both **buildings** contain a **dwelling unit**;
 - i) the **building separation** between the two **buildings** is at least 6.0 m;
 - ii) no driveway or **parking space**, whether covered or uncovered, is located within the required **building separation**;
 - iii) the maximum **height** of the rear **building** is one **storey** and 5.0 m to the roof ridge for a **building** with a pitched roof and 4.0 m for a **building** with a flat roof; and
 - iv) the rear **building** complies with the minimum **side yard** requirements for the **lot** and is set back at least 0.9 m from a **rear lot line** where there is an **abutting lane** or 3.0 m from a **rear lot line** without an **abutting lane**.

4.8A.10 Notwithstanding Section 4.8A.9, subject to a development permit approved by the **City**, a **building** with a maximum **height** greater than one **storey** or 5.0 m may be located within the **rear yard**, in whole or in part, provided that:

- a) the **building** is one of two **buildings** on the **lot** with a **floor area** greater than 10.0 m² and both **buildings** contain at least one **dwelling unit**;
- b) the **building separation** between the two **buildings** is at least 6.0 m;
- c) no driveway or **parking space**, whether covered or uncovered, is located within the required **building separation**;
- d) the maximum **height** of the rear **building** is two **storeys** and 7.5 m to the roof ridge for a **building** with a pitched roof or 6.0 m for a **building** with a flat roof, but shall not exceed the **residential vertical lot width envelope**; and
- e) the rear **building** complies with the minimum **side yard** requirements for the **lot** and is set back at least 0.9 m from a **rear lot line** where there is an **abutting lane** or 3.0 m from a **rear lot line** without an **abutting lane**;

5. Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, as amended, is further amended in Section 4.18 Residential Vertical Lot Width Envelope by replacing Section 4.18.5 as follows:

“4.18.5 Subject to Section 4.18.1b), for **small-scale multi-unit housing**, the **residential vertical lot width envelope** shall be a vertical envelope located parallel to each side **lot line**, and formed by planes rising vertically at the minimum required **side yard setback** to 7.0 m, and then extending inward and upward at an angle of 45° from the top of the vertical 7.0 m planes to the point at which the planes intersect with the maximum height plane of 10.0 m, as measured in Area “A” from a horizontal plane that is 0.3 m (1.0 ft.) above the highest elevation of the crown of any public **road abutting** the **lot**, and in Area “B” from the **finished site grade**, as generally shown in the diagram below:



6. Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, as amended, is further amended in Section 5.4 Secondary Suites by deleting Section 5.4.1c).

7. Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, as amended, is further amended at Section 8.19 Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (RSM/S, RSM/M, RSM/L, RSM/XL), as follows:

7.1. In Section 8.19.7 Yards & Setbacks, by inserting a new section following Section 8.19.7.4 as follows and renumbering the subsequent sections accordingly:

“5. Where a **building** with a **floor area** greater than 10.0 m², **vehicle** parking or **vehicle access** is located, in whole or in part, within 6.0 m of a **rear lot line**,

the minimum **rear yard** shall be measured from the point where the **building**, parking or **vehicle access** is furthest from the **rear lot line**.”

- 7.2. In Section 8.19.8 Permitted Heights, by:
- 7.2.1. In Section 8.19.8.1, replacing “9.0 m” with “10.0 m”;
- 7.2.2. Replacing Section 8.19.8.4 with the following:
- “4. The maximum **height** for **accessory structures** and detached **garages** and **carports** is 5.0 m to the roof ridge for a **building** with a pitched roof and 4.0 m for a **building** with a flat roof.”; and
- 7.2.3. Inserting a new section following Section 8.19.8.4 as follows:
- “5. For the purpose of this **zone**, **height** shall be measured in Area “A” from a horizontal plane that is 0.3 m (1.0 ft.) above the highest elevation of the crown of any public **road abutting** the **lot**, and in Area “B” from the **finished site grade**.”
- 7.3. In Section 8.19.10 Landscaping & Screening, by inserting a new section ahead of Section 8.19.10.1a) as follows and renumbering the subsequent section accordingly:
- “a) **fences** shall not exceed 1.2 m in **height** when located within 3.0 m of a **side lot line abutting** a public **road** or 6.0 m of a **front lot line abutting** a public **road**, and shall not exceed 1.83 m in **height** when located elsewhere within a required **yard**; and”
- 7.4. In Section 8.19.11 On-Site Parking and Loading, by inserting a new section following Section 8.19.11.1, as follows:
- “2. Notwithstanding Section 8.19.11.1, where **vehicle access** to and from a **lot** is by way of a shared driveway, no more than two **lots** shall share the driveway, parking is not permitted within the **front yard** or **exterior side yard**, and the total width of the shared driveway shall not exceed 6.0 m within the **front yard** or **exterior side yard**, subject to review and approval of the Director, Transportation.”
- 7.5. In Section 8.19.12 Other Regulations, by:
- 7.5.1. Inserting the following at the end of Section 8.19.12.1:
- “provided that the **buildings** are arranged with one **building** behind the other (i.e., not side-by-side);”; and
- 7.5.2. In Section 8.19.12.3, replacing “**principal building**” with “**building**”.

8. This Bylaw may be cited as **“Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 10631”**.

FIRST READING

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