



To: Planning Committee
From: Wayne Craig
General Manager, Planning and Development
Re: Zoning Bylaw Housekeeping Amendments

Date: August 6, 2026
File: 08-4430-01/2026-Vol01

Staff Recommendation

That Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 10786 to make housekeeping amendments be introduced and given first reading.

Executive Summary

This report recommends minor housekeeping amendments to Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500 to improve clarity, correct inconsistencies, and support easier interpretation and application of the bylaw for business applicants, the public and staff. The proposed changes focus on Section 4 and clarify how Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and density are calculated and applied to enclosed parking, indoor amenity space, common vertical circulation and private balconies. The amendments are technical in nature and do not change zoning intent or development rights.

Staff Report

Origin

This report introduces minor housekeeping amendments to the City of Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500 for the purpose of clarifying zoning requirements respecting the calculation of floor area for enclosed parking, indoor amenity space, common vertical circulation and private balconies.

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.

Analysis

Minor Proposed Amendments to Zoning Bylaw 8500

Attachment 1 identifies seven minor proposed amendments to Section 4 of Zoning Bylaw 8500. For clarity, these changes are organized into the four primary categories discussed in this report.

The proposed amendments are minor in nature and do not substantially affect the respective zoning provisions or impact building form, massing and character. The amendments aim to clarify the intent of the bylaw, facilitate interpretation, ensure consistency across provisions and improve readability.

A. Clarification of Parking Exemptions

An inconsistency has been identified in Section 4.2 (Calculation of Density in All Zones). While Section 4.2.2 a) correctly applies to all zones and outlines the 50 m² parking exemption, it contains an incorrect cross-reference. The clause currently references Section 4.3.1 b), whereas it should properly reference Section 4.3.3 a). Additionally, Section 4.2 requires amendment to explicitly state that the 50 m² exemption applies strictly to accessory parking, and that any floor area utilized for enclosed non-accessory parking uses is not exempted from Floor Area Ratio (FAR) calculations.

Further, Section 4.5 (Calculation of Density in Apartment Housing, Mixed Use, Commercial and Industrial Zones) lacks explicit clarity regarding whether enclosed parking within an apartment, mixed-use, commercial or industrial building or structure is excluded from the FAR calculations. To address this, it is recommended that a new clause be added to Section 4.5 to clarify the regulatory boundaries of this exemption:

- Accessory Parking: Enclosed parking areas completely dedicated to the accessory use of the apartment, mixed-use, commercial, or industrial building shall be excluded from the calculation of FAR.

- **Non-Accessory Parking:** Any floor area utilized for enclosed non-accessory parking uses, such as standalone commercial parking garages, is not exempted from FAR calculations.

B. Indoor Amenity Space Floor Area Exemptions

An additional 0.1 FAR is typically applied to standard and site-specific multi-family (townhouse, apartment and mixed-use) zones, provided this additional density is used for indoor common amenity space, such as fitness centres, lounges and meeting rooms. However, a review indicates that this additional density is omitted from several site-specific zones. To ensure consistency, it is recommended that this provision be included within the General Provisions of the Zoning Bylaw (i.e., Sections 4.4, Calculation of Density in Town Housing Zones), and Section 4.5 (Calculation of Density in Apartment Housing, Mixed Use, Commercial and Industrial Zones).

C. Clarification of Common Vertical Circulation Exemptions

Amendments are proposed for Section 4.5 (Calculation of Density in Apartment Housing, Mixed-Use, Commercial and Industrial Zones) to clarify the application of exemptions for common vertical circulation (i.e. common stairs and elevators). While these structures are generally excluded from FAR calculations, the ground-level footprint of these vertical shafts must be included in the total FAR calculations.

D. Exemptions for Covered Outdoor Space

Amendments are proposed to Section 4.5 (Calculation of Density in Apartment Housing, Mixed Use, Commercial and Industrial Zones) to clarify a long-standing interpretation that covered common outdoor amenity spaces and private outdoor space that are never enclosed are excluded from FAR and density calculations.

Budgetary Implications

None.

Conclusion

Minor Zoning Bylaw housekeeping amendments are proposed to enhance the clarity, accuracy and quality of the Zoning Bylaw and make its interpretation easier for businesses, applicants, the public and staff.

It is recommended that Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 10786, be introduced, given first reading, and forwarded to the next scheduled Public Hearing.

Respectfully submitted,

Joshua Reis, Director, Development

Report Contributors

This report was prepared by Edwin Lee, Planner 2 and reviewed by Policy Planning and Building Approvals.

Endorsed by Serena Lusk, CAO

Att. 1: Summary of Minor Proposed Amendments to Zoning Bylaw 8500

**Summary of Minor Proposed Amendments to Zoning Bylaw 8500
(Proposed Amendment Bylaw 10786)**

Item No.	Zoning Bylaw Section(s)	Proposed Amendment(s)	Justification / Comments
1.	4.2.2 Calculation of Density in All Zones	Clarify that enclosed non-accessory parking areas are not exempted from FAR calculations.	Non-accessory parking operates as a principal use rather than a supportive one, so its floor area must be counted toward density. This prevents unintended density bonuses and maintains control over building massing and scale.
2.	4.2.2 a) Calculation of Density in All Zones	Replace reference in Section 4.2.2 a) from “4.3.1 b)” to “4.3.3 a)”, which is the correct section reference.	Corrects section reference.
3.	4.4 Calculation of Density in Town Housing Zones	Add a new clause in Section 4.4.1 a) to provide an additional 0.1 FAR exclusively for indoor common amenity space as a general provision in all town housing zones.	This approach is consistent with other sections of the Zoning Bylaw including the standard townhouse zones and many of the site-specific zones that allow town housing.
4.	4.5 Calculation of Density in Apartment Housing, Mixed Use, Commercial and Industrial Zones	Add a new clause in Section 4.5.1 to provide an additional 0.1 FAR exclusively for indoor common amenity space as a general provision in all apartment housing zones.	This approach is consistent with other sections of the Zoning Bylaw including the standard apartment zones and many of the site-specific zones that allow apartment uses.
5.	4.5 Calculation of Density in Apartment Housing, Mixed Use, Commercial and Industrial Zones	Add a new clause in Section 4.5.1 stating that “enclosed parking within a building or structure located on site shall be excluded from the calculation of floor area ratio.	Reiterates the exemption stated earlier in the Bylaw (Section 4.2.2), thereby clarifying that the exemption applies to other specified zones.
6.	4.5.1 b) Calculation of Density in Apartment Housing, Mixed Use, Commercial and Industrial Zones	Amend Section 4.5.1 b) to clarify that common stairwells and elevator shafts at ground level are included in the calculation of floor area ratio.	Provides improved language that aligns with provisions applicable to other forms of development, including parking structure townhouse zones.
7.	4.5.1 d) Calculation of Density in Apartment Housing, Mixed Use, Commercial and Industrial Zones	Amend Section 4.5.1 d) to clarify that both covered outdoor amenity space and covered private open space in an apartment or mixed-use building are not included in the calculation of floor area ratio.	Provide improved language that aligns with a long-standing interpretation.



**Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500
Amendment Bylaw 10786
(Housekeeping Amendments)**

The Council of the City of Richmond enacts as follows:

1. Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, as amended, is further amended at Section 4.2. [Calculation of Density in All Zones] by deleting Section 4.2.2 in its entirety and replacing it with the following:
 - “4.2.2 **Enclosed parking** within a **building** or **structure** located on **site**, other than **non-accessory parking**, is not included in the calculation of maximum **floor area ratio**, and is subject to:
 - a) the maximum 50.0 m² specified in Section 4.3.3 a) for **single detached housing** and **two-unit housing**, and in Section 4.4.1 b) for **town housing**; and
 - b) any other limitations in any **zone** or **site specific zone**.”
2. Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, as amended, is further amended at Section 4.4 [Calculation of Density in Town Housing Zones] by adding a new Section 4.4.1 a), as follows, and renumbering the remaining sections accordingly:
 - “a) up to 0.1 **floor area ratio**, provided that it is entirely used to accommodate **amenity space**.”
3. Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, as amended, is further amended at Section 4.5 [Calculation of Density in Apartment Housing, Mixed Use, Commercial and Industrial Zones] by:
 - a) deleting Section 4.5.1 b) in its entirety and replacing it with the following:
 - “b) common stairwells and common elevator shafts; however, the ground level of common stairwells and common elevator shafts are included in the calculation of maximum **floor area ratio**; and”
 - b) deleting Section 4.5.1 d) in its entirety and replacing it with the following:
 - “d) covered outdoor **amenity space**, and covered **private outdoor open space**, for the private use of a **dwelling unit**, which are never enclosed, for an

apartment or mixed use building, as specified by a Development Permit approved by the **City**.”

- c) adding new Sections 4.5.1 a) and 4.5.1 b), as follows, and renumbering the remaining sections accordingly:

- “a) up to 0.1 **floor area ratio**, provided that it is entirely used to accommodate **amenity space**.
- b) **enclosed parking** within a **building** or **structure** located on **site**, other than **non-accessory parking**.”

4. This Bylaw is cited as “**Richmond Zoning Bylaw 8500, Amendment Bylaw 10786**”.

FIRST READING

A PUBLIC HEARING WAS HELD ON

SECOND READING

THIRD READING

ADOPTED

_____	CITY OF RICHMOND
_____	APPROVED for content by originating dept.
_____	EL
_____	APPROVED for legality by Solicitor
_____	BRB

MAYOR

CORPORATE OFFICER