

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions New Housing Rules

Disclaimer: This is not a legal document and does not outline all applicable regulations. Any contradiction, dispute, or difference between the contents of this document and applicable provincial law or City bylaws, plans, policies, or guidelines will be resolved by reference to the law, bylaws, or other official documents.

Q: What are the new housing rules?

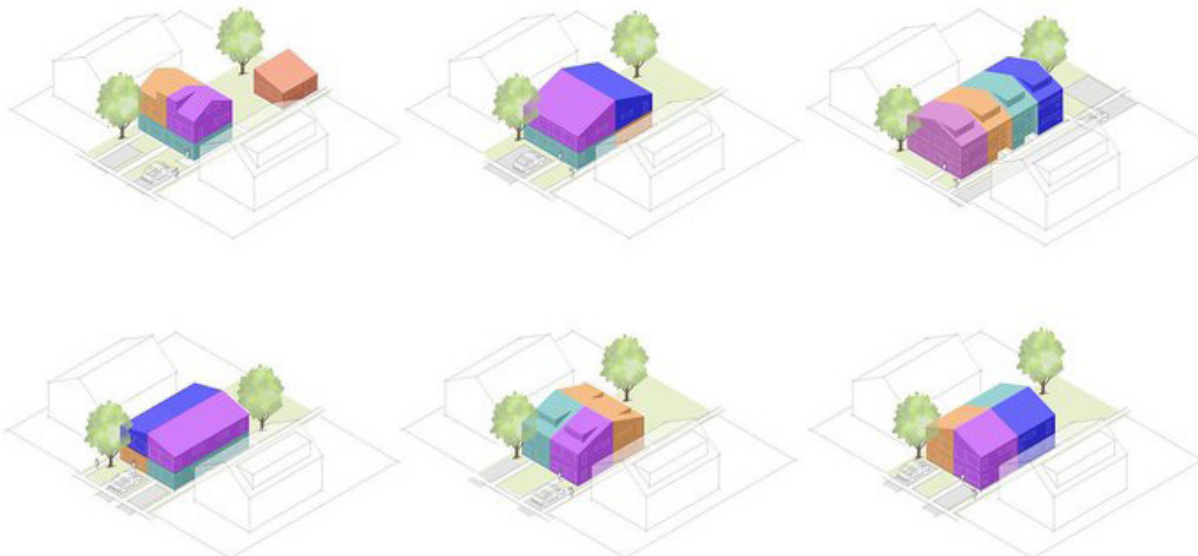
A: The City must allow up to 4 housing units on most single family properties, as per provincial law.

There are approximately 22,000 properties in Abbotsford that are zoned for single family housing. Previously, if a property owner wanted to add more housing to their property, they would have to apply to rezone the property. The new housing rules mean that the City must change the zoning on most of those properties to allow up to 4 housing units, so that property owners do not have to rezone their property to build more housing.

Also, the City must permit an accessory dwelling unit, like a secondary suite, on almost all properties where a single family dwelling is permitted.

Q: What do the new housing rules mean?

A: The new housing rules mean that up to 4 housing units will be allowed on most properties in single family neighbourhoods. As shown below, examples could include secondary suites, coach houses, garden suites, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes.



Source: BC Ministry of Housing

Q: Will up to 4 housing units be allowed on my property?

A: It is likely that up to 4 housing units will be allowed on your property, if your property is zoned for single family or duplex housing.

Up to 4 housing units will be allowed on properties that meet the following criteria:

- Located inside the City's Urban Development Boundary
- Zoned for single family or duplex housing
- Less than 4,050 m² (43,594 ft²)
- Not subject to an exemption

Q: What zones will allow up to 4 housing units?

A: The zones that will be updated to allow up to 4 housing units include:

- Suburban Residential (SR)
- Urban Estate Residential (RS1)
- Urban Residential (RS3; RS3-A)
- Urban Residential, Infill (RS3-i)
- Urban Residential, Infill Garden Suite (RS3-ig)
- Duplex Residential (RS4)
- Duplex Residential, Infill (RS4-i)
- Residential (RS5; RS5-A)
- Compact Lot Residential (RS6)
- Compact Lot Coach House Residential (RS6-C)
- Infill Residential (RS7)
- Coach House Residential (RCH)
- Urban Residential Hybrid (RSH)
- Residential Corner Store (RCS)

Q: When will the new housing rules be allowed?

A: The City must update its Zoning Bylaw to allow the new housing rules by June 30, 2024.

Q: Will single family housing be allowed?

A: Yes. The new housing rules will allow single family housing. However, additional housing units will be allowed on most single family properties.

Q: Is the City required to allow the new housing rules?

A: Yes. The City must allow the new housing rules, as per provincial legislation.

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Q: Why did the Province make the new housing rules?

A: According to the Province, the new housing rules are intended to increase housing supply, create more diverse housing choices, and contribute to more affordable housing. The new housing rules allow more housing to be built in single family neighbourhoods, without a rezoning application.

Q: What must the City allow because of the new housing rules?

A: By June 30, 2024, on properties inside the Urban Development Boundary that are zoned for single family dwellings or duplexes, the City must allow the following:

- up to 3 units on lots less than or equal to 280 m² (3,014 ft²);
- up to 4 units on lots greater than 280 m²; and
- up to 6 units on lots greater than 280 m² and within 400 metres of a bus stop identified by the Province (none in Abbotsford at this time).

In addition, the City must allow an accessory dwelling unit, like a secondary suite, in all zones that allow a single family dwelling, including outside the Urban Development Boundary.

Q: How can I find out if 4 housing units will be allowed on my property?

A: You can use the City's online [WebMap](#) to see if up to 4 housing units will be allowed on your property, as per the following instructions:

1. [Enable the Urban Development Boundary](#)

In the layer list on the left side of the map, click + next to "Development Layers" and select "Urban Development Boundary." This shows the City's Urban Development Boundary. If your property is inside the Urban Development Boundary, up to 4 housing units may be permitted.

2. [Confirm Your Zoning](#)

Use the map or address bar at the top right of the map to find your property. Click on your property. Your zoning will be listed next to "Zoning" in the information box that appears. If your property is zoned for single detached dwellings or duplexes, up to 4 housing units may be permitted. You can review your zone using the City's online [Zoning Bylaw](#). Common zones where up to 4 units may be permitted include RS3, RS3-A, RS3-i, RS4, RS5, RS5-A, RS6, RS7, and RSH.

3. [Confirm Your Lot Area](#)

Your lot area is listed in the information box when you select your property. Lot area is listed next to "Area (from GIS)." If your property is less than 4,050 m², up to 4 units may be permitted.

Alternatively, or if you have further questions, you can contact City staff at the following:

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Q: Are there properties where the new housing rules do not apply?

A: Yes. The new housing rules do not apply to the following properties in Abbotsford:

- lands outside the City's Urban Development Boundary;
- lands not zoned for single detached or duplex development;
- lands governed by a rural land use bylaw (former Area H on Sumas Mountain);
- lands protected under s. 12.1(2) of the *Heritage Conservation Act*;
- lands designated as protected under a bylaw made under s. 611 of the *Local Government Act*;
- lands subject to a heritage revitalization agreement;
- lands not connected to a municipal water or sewer system;
- lands within a zone where the minimum lot size is 4,050 m² or greater; and
- lands larger than 4,050 m².

Note that despite these exemptions, an accessory dwelling unit will be allowed in all zones that permit a single family dwelling, except zones established under a rural land use bylaw (former Area H on Sumas Mountain).

Q: What will the zoning regulations be for the new housing rules?

A: The City is developing the zoning regulations for the new housing rules. Zoning will be considered and adopted by Council, based on best practice, provincial legislation, and the context of Abbotsford.

To help municipalities develop the zoning regulations for new housing, the Province has created a [Policy & Site Standards Manual](#). The Province requires municipalities to consider the recommendation of the manual. The Province recommends the following regulations for new housing in Abbotsford:

Setback (Front)	2 metres (minimum)
Setback (Rear)	1.5 metres (minimum)
Setback (Side)	1.2 metres (minimum)
Maximum Height	11 metres
Maximum Storeys	3
Maximum Lot Coverage	50%

Q: What will the parking requirements be for the new housing rules?

A: The City is developing the parking requirements for the new housing rules. Parking will be considered and adopted by Council, based on best practice, provincial legislation, and the context of Abbotsford.

Through its [Policy & Site Standards Manual](#), the Province requires the City to consider a maximum parking requirement of 0.5 spaces per unit on properties well-served by public transit and a maximum of 1 space per unit otherwise. According to the Policy & Site Standards Manual, permitting more than 1 space per unit could negatively impact housing viability, affordability, tree retention, stormwater management, and greenspace provision.

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Q: Do the new housing rules mean my property will be redeveloped?

A: No. Development applications are made by property owners and reviewed in accordance with relevant plans, policy, and legislation. If a property owner does not apply to redevelop their property, it will not be redeveloped.

Q: Do the new housing rules mean my neighbourhood will be redeveloped?

A: The new housing rules mean that over time, new housing units will be added to single family neighbourhoods. The degree of change is expected to be variable, based on market uptake, local conditions, and the type of housing that property owners wish to build. Some property owners may decide to redevelop a single family home into a fourplex, while some may choose to add a secondary suite to an existing single family home. The new housing rules are expected to bring change to some neighbourhoods, based on market factors, local conditions, and property owner decisions.

Q: Will the new housing rules affect City infrastructure?

A: The new housing rules may increase the demand on City infrastructure in certain neighbourhoods. However, the City uses Development Cost Charges (DCCs) to ensure that new development pays for the infrastructure that it requires. This means that if new infrastructure is required to support new housing, it will be paid for by developers and property owners who wish to build new housing.

Q: Will my property taxes increase because of the new housing rules?

A: Not necessarily. Changes to property tax are driven by how much your property increased or decreased in value, compared to the average increase or decrease of similar properties. If your assessed value increased by more than the average, your property taxes may increase, but if your assessed value increased by less than the average, your property taxes may decrease. In addition, tax rates are adjusted each year to only generate the amount of money needed to run the City's operations. The assessed value of your property might increase because of the new housing rules, but your property taxes will not necessarily increase because of the new housing rules.

Q: Are building permits be required for the new housing rules?

A: Yes. Construction of new housing is subject to the [BC Building Code](#) and all applicable bylaws, regulations, and enactments, including the City's [Building Bylaw](#).

Q: Are development permits be required for the new housing rules?

A: The Province discourages cities from requiring a development permit to approve the form and character of housing that is allowed by the new housing rules. However, the City's development permit guidelines for protection of the environment, protection from natural hazards, and protection of agriculture will continue to apply to new development.

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Q: Are development notifications required for the new housing rules?

A: Advanced public notice will not be required for most development allowed by the new housing rules, because a rezoning application will not be required. However, a building permit will be required, and the City's [Building Bylaw](#) requires that the building permit card be posted at a conspicuous place on any property where building is taking place.

Q: Are public hearings required for the new housing rules?

A: No. The City is not allowed to hold a public hearing when updating its Zoning Bylaw to permit the new housing rules.

Q: Can I apply to build under the new housing rules before they are allowed in the City's Zoning Bylaw?

A: No. The City must update the Zoning Bylaw to allow the new housing rules by June 30, 2024, but the new housing rules do not take effect until the City's Zoning Bylaw is updated.

Q: If I have an active development application, how do the new housing rules affect me?

A: The City is continuing to accept and process development applications. Please note that the City's Zoning Bylaw must be updated to allow the new housing rules by June 30, 2024. The City will communicate any updates to the public and consider the impact to active development applications. Speak to your file manager if you have specific questions about how the new housing rules could affect your active development application.

Q: Where can I ask further questions about the new housing rules?

A: If you have further questions about the new housing rules, you can contact City staff at the following:

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