

Building Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing

To comply with provincial requirements for small-scale multi-unit housing, up to four dwelling units are allowed in low-density neighbourhoods throughout the City of Coquitlam. The City developed this guide to help property owners and developers who are interested in building this type of housing.

This guide applies to properties designated and zoned for small-scale residential use. To check the Official Community Plan land use designation and zoning of your property, visit coquitlam.ca/CityMaps.

Some properties may not be eligible to build small-scale multi-unit housing. Check [Coquitlam's online mapping portal](#) to see if your property is exempt.

What is Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing?

The City uses the term 'small-scale residential' to describe this type of housing. It is a flexible definition for a variety of housing types, which take many shapes and forms, including:



Dwelling units can be stratified and sold or not stratified and rented. If you are adding units to your property that you would like to stratify, please see our [Guide to Adding Units](#) and [Strata Title Conversion Guidelines](#).

What Can I Build?

The number of units of small-scale multi-unit housing you can build will depend on the location and size of your property:

- Up to 3 units on lots 280 m² (3,014 sq. ft.) or smaller
- Up to 4 units on lots larger than 280 m² (3,014 sq. ft.) but less than 4,050 m² (1 acre)
- Up to 1 principal unit and 1 accessory unit on lots 4,050 m² (1 acre) and larger

What are the Small-scale Residential Zones?

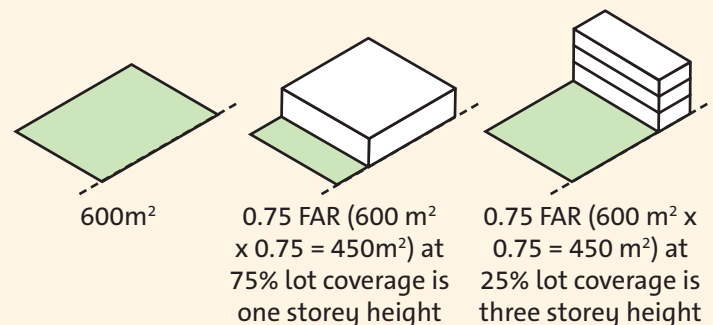
Coquitlam has four small-scale residential zones that allow you to add more units to a single-family residential property, or to demolish what's there and build new housing in its place. The City's [Zoning Bylaw](#) provides detailed development regulations for each of these zones.

Zoning Regulation		R-1 Small-Scale Residential	R-2 Compact Small-Scale Residential	R-3 Transitional Small-Scale Residential	R-4 Intensive Small-Scale Residential*
Maximum Number of Dwelling Units	Lots smaller than 280 m ²	3 units	3 units	2 principal units + 1 secondary suite	No maximum
	Lots 280 m ² or larger	4 units	4 units	2 principal units + 2 secondary suites	
Minimum Lot Size for Subdivision		650 m ² and 18.5 m wide	465 m ² and 12.5 m wide	650 m ² and 18.5 m wide	930 m ²
Maximum Density		1 or 2 units: 0.65 FAR 3 or 4 units: 0.75 FAR	0.75 FAR	0.5 FAR	0.85 FAR
Maximum Lot Coverage		50%	50%	45%	50%
Maximum Buildings per Lot		Multiple	1 or more	1	Multiple
Maximum Height for Buildings with a Dwelling Unit		3 storeys or 11m	3 storeys or 11m	3 storeys or 11m	9.5m or 11m for pitched roofs
Per-Unit Off-Street Parking Requirements		For all Small-Scale Residential Zones: 1 parking space for units smaller than 850 sq. ft. 1.5 parking spaces for units 850 sq. ft. to 1,700 sq. ft. (rounded up to the nearest whole number) 2 parking spaces for units larger than 1,700 sq. ft.			

**Note: The R-4 Intensive Small-Scale Residential zone will be reviewed as part of an upcoming Townhouse and Rowhouse Review project.*

What is Floor Area Ratio (FAR)?

FAR measures building density as a ratio of total floor area to the total property area. For example, on a 600 m² lot with a maximum FAR of 0.75, you could build up to 450 m² of floor area. In small-scale residential areas, FAR is calculated using the gross lot area, before any land is dedicated for road or lane widening.



How do I fit parking into a small-scale residential development?

Parking requirements for small-scale residential projects are based on unit size, not a flat rate. This helps balance parking needs with space for buildings and amenities. For example, a triplex with 1,200 sq. ft. units requires 1.5 spaces per unit—5 spaces total (rounded up). When two spaces are required for a unit, they can be arranged in tandem (one behind the other) to save space.

What is the Process for Developing my Property?

If you decide to redevelop your property, certain permits are required, depending on the type of development. The steps below lay out a general process for development. However, there are other steps and requirements that may be involved, which will be communicated by the City throughout the redevelopment process.

Step 0
Enquiry Meeting (Optional)

Step 1
Pre-Application

Step 2
Formal Development Application

Step 3
Building Permit and Demolition Permit

Step 4
Pay Development Fees and Charges

Step 5
Construction and Occupancy Permit

Step 0 Enquiry Meeting (Optional)

- You may want an enquiry meeting if you're looking for feedback from staff about a specific concept, plan or proposal at the earliest stages of development.
- Review the [Enquiry Meeting Guide](#) for more information and booking details.

Step 1 Pre-Application

- This is a preliminary review of your development concept plan. It can help to avoid any major issues prior to your formal development application.
- Read the [Pre-Application Guide](#) and [Checklist](#) for submission requirements.



Step 2

Formal Development Application

- The type of development application will depend on what you're looking to do and how much change is being proposed. While there are many types of development applications, the City of Coquitlam generally processes them concurrently as part of a combined project, with the exception of a Building Permit. Your development application is submitted online through the [City's Development Application Portal](#).

Your formal application may include one or all of the following:

Subdivision

- If you own more than one property and are looking to combine them to create a larger property, create smaller lots out of a larger property, or dedicate a road or lane as part of your development, you will need to apply for a subdivision.
- If you are planning to add stratified units to a property with an existing home (that you aren't planning to demolish), you will also need to submit a Strata Title Conversion Application at this stage.
- Read the [Subdivision Application Guide](#) and [Strata Title Conversion Guidelines](#) for more information.

Development Permit

- A Development Permit is required for most small-scale residential development to make sure the buildings and the landscaping meet the City's Urban Design and Development Permit Area Guidelines.
- Read the [Development Permit Guide](#) for more information.

Rezoning

- The City has already zoned most low-density properties to allow for small-scale multi-unit housing development. This means you will likely not need to rezone to build this type of housing. However, if you would like to rezone to another small-scale residential zone, you will need to comply with policies in the City's Official Community Plan and submit an application.

Public hearings aren't required for small-scale residential rezoning applications that are consistent with Coquitlam's Official Community Plan.

You may be required to provide a portion of your property to allow for road or lane widening. You may also need to either construct, or contribute funds toward, frontage improvements such as sidewalks or street trees.

Step 3

Building Permit and Demolition Permit

- Once the [Formal Development Application](#) has been reviewed and approved, you will need to apply for a [Building Permit](#). This is to ensure your proposed development meets the Province of B.C.'s Building Code.
- If you are removing existing structures on your property, you will also need to apply for a Demolition Permit at this stage.

Step 4

Pay Development Fees and Charges

- As part of your development, you will have to pay fees used by the City to provide infrastructure and amenities that support growth and development. For small-scale multi-unit housing development, you will have to pay [Development Cost Charges](#). These are fees paid by all new development to support parks, sidewalks and paths, streets and water and sewer infrastructure.
- If you are adding more units than before, you will need to pay Metro Vancouver, TransLink and School District 43 charges.
- You may also need to pay [Amenity Cost Charges](#), which help pay for many different types of amenities, like parks, libraries, trails and community and recreation centres.

Step 5

Construction and Occupancy Permit

- Once you receive your Building Permit you can start construction.
- The City will conduct several inspections throughout, and will do a final inspection once your development is complete. If your development passes this final inspection, the City will issue you with an Occupancy Permit. People can now move into the new building.

Visit coquitlam.ca/development for development documents and information. Find small-scale multi-unit housing resources and information at coquitlam.ca/multiplex.