

Riparian Areas Protection Regulation (RAPR) in Coquitlam



MARCH 2022

This Summary Guide is intended to help homeowners, developers, contractors and Qualified Environmental Professionals (QEP) determine how the Provincial Riparian Areas Protection Regulation (RAPR) applies to developments in the City of Coquitlam. **The purpose of RAPR is to protect and preserve fish habitat and riparian areas during development. The RAPR is applied in the City of Coquitlam through Section 523 of the Zoning Bylaw.**

Top 10 Terms to Know:

1. Riparian Areas Protection Regulation (RAPR)

- › A 2019 provincial regulation to protect fish habitat and riparian areas during development
- › Replaces the former Riparian Areas Regulation (RAR), which was in effect from 2004-2019
- › Applied in the City of Coquitlam through Section 523 of the Zoning Bylaw
- › Applies to new residential, commercial and industrial development, and accompanying activities, within the Riparian Assessment Area (RAA)

2. Riparian Assessment Area (RAA)

- › A 30m wide strip on each side of a stream, or a 30m wide radius around a lake, pond or wetland
- › For ravines > 60m wide, (excluding stream floodplain width) a 10m wide strip along the top of bank

3. Streamside Protection & Enhancement Area (SPEA)

- › The protected portion of the RAA that restricts activities such as development and removal of trees or vegetation
- › Determined through either the RAPR Simple Assessment or Detailed Assessment methodology
- › Acknowledges and accounts for historical areas of human disturbance, such as homes that were constructed within the SPEA prior to the RAR/RAPR

4. Stream

- › A watercourse or body of water that is connected by surface flow to fish habitat (whether or not usually containing water)
- › Includes ditches, streams, creeks, wetlands, springs, ponds, rivers and lakes (does not include rivers under tidal influence, such as the Fraser River)

5. Top of Bank (TOB)

- › The break in slope or edge of flood plain along the sides of a stream channel, as determined by a QEP and/or a BC Land Surveyor — may also be referred to as 'top of ravine bank' when a ravine is present

6. Stream Boundary (formerly 'High Water Mark')

- › The visible high water mark of a stream, as identified by a QEP

7. Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP)

- › An individual meeting the QEP criteria as set out in Section 21 of the RAPR, who has completed the technical RAPR training and is registered under the Professional Governance Act (e.g., registered professional biologist/R.P.Bio, applied science technologist/AScT, professional engineer/P.Eng, etc.)

8. RAPR Simple Assessment

- › A methodology under the RAPR for determining the SPEA. The resulting SPEA is often the widest and measured from the top of bank
- › In Coquitlam, the City has applied the Simple Assessment SPEA by default in the City's QtheMap mapping tool to all known streams using topographic survey data

9. RAPR Detailed Assessment

- › A methodology under the RAPR for determining the SPEA. The resulting SPEA is often smaller than the SPEA determined under the Simple Assessment method and is measured from the stream boundary
- › A Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) must be retained to conduct a Detailed Assessment

10. Preliminary RAPR Assessment

- › A general assessment conducted by a QEP to review the potential Detailed Assessment SPEA for a property
- › Smaller in scope, and often lower in costs, than a Detailed Assessment — provides an overall snapshot of possible setbacks



Getting Started

1 View your property on QtheMap

- > Visit coquitlam.ca/qthemap and click “Explore QtheMap.”
- > Find your property by typing the address in the search bar.
- > Click the “Layer List” icon and check the Environment box, and subcategories (e.g., SPEA, RAA).

2 Contact the City for more information

- > Email: watercourseinquiries@coquitlam.ca
- > Phone: 604 – 927 – 3500
- > In Person: Ground Floor City Hall, Engineering and Public Works, 3000 Guildford Way, Coquitlam BC

3 Select a preferred assessment route

- > Retain a **BC Land Surveyor** if selecting the **Simple Assessment** method.
- > Retain a **QEP** if selecting the **Detailed Assessment** method.
- > Adjust development plans as necessary.

DISCLAIMER: The watercourse setback map layers on QtheMap represent an assessment of watercourses and associated SPEA setbacks throughout the City of Coquitlam at a watershed-level (i.e., not site-level). The information presented may not reflect the exact location of all watercourses, and other unknown watercourses may not yet be identified. These watercourse setback map layers are a work in progress and are updated as new information becomes available. The City does not guarantee or warrant the reliability, accuracy, currency or completeness of the information presented. This information is provided for information purposes only and for no other purposes. If any contradictions exist between this document and relevant City Bylaws, Codes, or Policies, the text of the Bylaws, Codes or Policies will be the legal authority.

My property falls within the Riparian Assessment Area. Does the RAPR apply to my development if...

I am building a new home, shed, garage, retaining wall or other permanent structure on my property?		Yes. The RAPR applies to new residential, commercial and industrial developments within the Riparian Assessment Area.
I am subdividing my land, applying for an Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment, applying for Rezoning (RZ), applying for a Development Variance Permit (DVP) or applying for a Temporary Use Permit (TUP)?		Yes. The RAPR applies to subdivisions of land, Official Community Plan amendments, Rezoning, Development Permits, Development Variance Permits and Temporary Use Permits within the Riparian Assessment Area.
I am demolishing existing permanent structures, such as a home, commercial or industrial building or shed on a foundation?		No. Future developments will be subject to the RAPR, however.
I am building a new home, shed, retaining wall or other permanent structure on an existing foundation?*		No. If no changes are made within the existing development footprint, the RAPR does not apply.
I am repairing an existing retaining wall or foundation?*		No. If no changes are made to the footprint of the existing retaining wall or foundation, the RAPR does not apply.
I am building or developing for farm activities on my agricultural property?		No. The RAPR does not apply to areas modified for agricultural use or normal farm practices under the Right to <i>Farm Act</i> .
My proposed works have been authorized by Fisheries & Oceans Canada (DFO) under the <i>Fisheries Act</i> ?		No. The RAPR does not apply to development authorized by DFO under the <i>Fisheries Act</i> .

It is the responsibility of the applicant to follow all other relevant federal and provincial regulations and City policies including, but not limited to, those related to stormwater management, flood risk management, steep or unstable slopes, and wildlife protection.

* Contact Environment Division about foundation repairs.

What activities are permitted in the SPEA?

Building on an existing foundation, or repairing an existing foundation?*		Yes , if no changes to the existing foundation or building footprint are made.
Removing hazardous trees?		Yes . Hazard trees that pose a safety risk, as identified by a Certified Arborist, may be removed from the SPEA. A Tree Cutting Permit may be required from the City for the removal of a hazard tree in the SPEA.
Removing trees or vegetation (including mowing) for aesthetic reasons?	 	No . Trees and vegetation cannot be disturbed or removed from the SPEA for aesthetic reasons. However , if an area within the SPEA has sustained historical human disturbance that preceded RAR or RAPR, such as a mowed lawn or garden, this area may continue to be maintained so long as there is no change in the footprint of the disturbed area. Contact the City of Coquitlam for more information.
Removing weeds or invasive vegetation?	 	General weeding is not permitted in the SPEA. However , invasive plant species may be removed (with City permission) if they are preventing native species from establishing. Examples of invasive species are Japanese knotweed and Himalayan blackberry. Please contact the City of Coquitlam for more information on invasive species: ParksCustomerService@coquitlam.ca
Planting trees, shrubs, flowers or other vegetation?	 	Planting vegetation in the SPEA is permitted only as part of a City-approved restoration program .
Building a new foundation for a home, shed, commercial/industrial building or other permanent structure?		No . New permanent structures, such as those requiring foundations, are not permitted in the SPEA.
Constructing an overhanging feature, such as a floating porch or roof extension?		No . Additional overhangs (cantilevering) are not permitted within the SPEA.
Building a garden shed, treehouse, footbridge or pathway?		No . New structures are not permitted within the SPEA. Following a detailed RAPR assessment, old structures may be required to be removed from the SPEA.
Hanging birdhouses, birdfeeders or bat boxes?		No . Wildlife houses or feeders must be maintained and, therefore, would require ongoing human disturbance within the SPEA. The intent of the SPEA is to preserve a naturalized riparian area.

*Contact Environment Division if foundation repairs are part of a new development or redevelopment.



How do I find a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP)?

City of Coquitlam maintains a list of local QEPs and can provide this list upon request. Contact watercourseinquiries@coquitlam.ca



The QEP determined that the SPEA takes up most of my property. Do I have any other options?

You can apply for an 'Undue Hardship' variance from the Province, or apply for a 'Harmful Alterations, Disruption and Destruction' (HADD) authorization from DFO. The QEP can determine whether undue hardship applies under RAPR and reduce the SPEA in accordance with RAPR methodology.



Do I need a Watercourse Protection Development Permit?

A Watercourse Protection Development Permit (WDP) is required within specific neighbourhood areas. A RAPR assessment is likely a required component of a WDP. Email watercourseinquiries@coquitlam.ca for more information or see the Watercourse Protection Development Permit Application Guide on the City's website.



The ditch running through or along my property is usually dry. Does this count as a stream under RAPR?

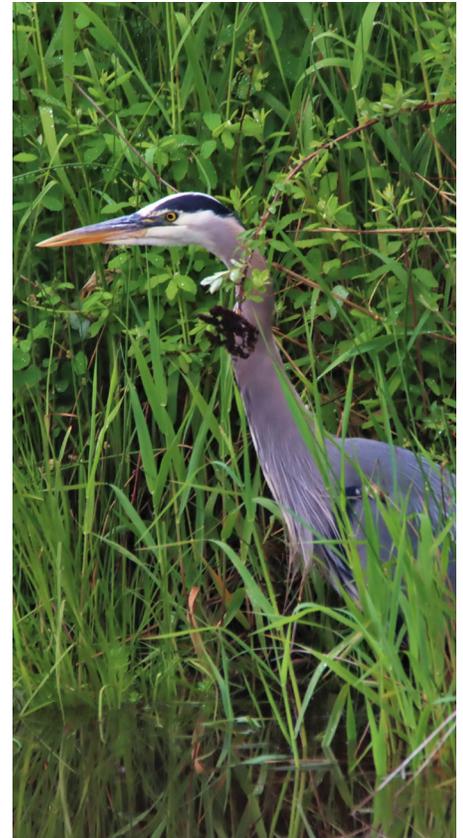
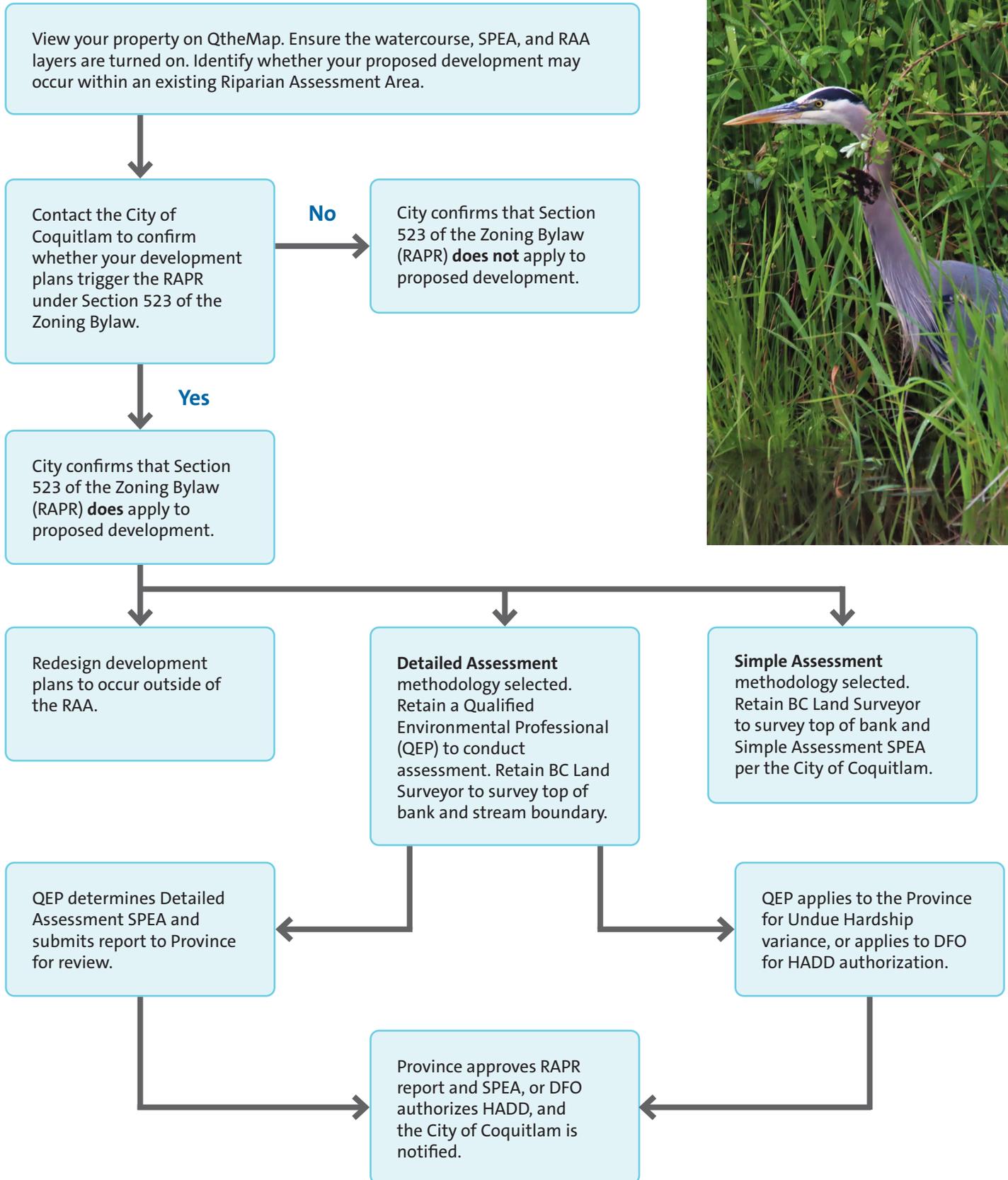
You will need to retain a QEP to assess the ditch to determine whether the ditch meets the criteria of a 'stream' under RAPR.

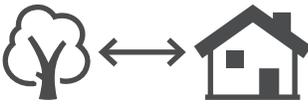


What additional environmental setbacks might apply?

- In the City of Coquitlam, additional environmental setbacks for flood protection or slope control measures may apply. These are described in Section 519 of the Zoning Bylaw.
- The City of Coquitlam recommends a 6m rear yard setback and 3m side yard setback from the SPEA. This is to allow for sufficient usable outdoor space, since the SPEA is not intended to act as a functional extension of the yard. These setbacks are flexible, and may be reduced at the discretion of the City.
- Legal setbacks as defined by registered covenant agreements with the City of Coquitlam or Province of BC may apply.
- Other building setbacks, such as those relating to geotechnical or windfirm assessments may apply.

Overview: RAPR Options and Processes



	Simple Assessment	Detailed Assessment
Assessment Completed By	 <p>N/A</p> <p>The City of Coquitlam automatically applies the most conservative setback, measured from the top of bank, based on topographic City data. No Provincial review or approval is required.</p>	 <p>QEP</p> <p>Qualified Environmental Professional. Additional environmental assessments (e.g. arborist, geotechnical) may be required, as determined by the QEP. Provincial review and approval is required.</p>
BC Land Surveyor Required	 <p>A BC Land Surveyor must survey the top of bank, and property boundaries, and mark the SPEA on the ground.</p>	 <p>A BC Land Surveyor must survey the top of bank, stream boundary, and property boundaries.</p>
Average Cost	 <p>Avg. is \$1,200 +</p>	 <p>Avg. is \$2,800 +</p>
Average Time to Complete	 <p>Average is 1-3 months</p>	 <p>Average is 2-6 months</p>
Setback / SPEA applied	 <p>Maximum. Most conservative (largest) SPEA applied with smaller area available for development. Measured from the top of bank.</p>	 <p>Potentially reduced. Often smaller SPEA applied with larger area available for development. Measured from the stream boundary.</p>





For information about existing riparian areas near you in the City of Coquitlam, explore your property on QtheMap at coquitlam.ca/qthemap. You can also reach our staff for assistance in-person at City Hall, by phone at 604-927-3500, or by email at watercourseinquiries@coquitlam.ca.

For more information about the RAPR, contact the Province via email at RiparianAreas@Victoria1.gov.bc.ca

Environment Division | 3000 Guildford Way | Coquitlam, BC | V3B 7N2
604-927-3500 | watercourseinquiries@coquitlam.ca

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