



2025 Zoning Bylaw Updates

Overview

January 2026

DISCLAIMER

This is not a legal document.

It does not outline all applicable regulations. Rather, it provides a summary of recent Zoning Bylaw updates.

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.

ZONING BYLAW UPDATES

As part of the Abbotsford 2050 planning process, updates to the Zoning Bylaw were introduced to improve clarity and better align the Zoning Bylaw with the OCP. The majority of zoning updates are related to Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing. For a complete guide to SSMUH development in Abbotsford, see the [SSMUH Application Guide](#). This document is intended to provide an overview of other, non-SSMUH related zoning updates. The updates outlined below generally increase permissions for residential uses and, as a result, some applicants may wish to amend their applications to take advantage of the new rules.

What has changed?

Some of the more notable changes include:

Building Floor Area

Changes to Zoning Bylaw definitions of *Floor Area, Net* and *Floor Area, Gross* impact the way that floor area is calculated.

Floor Area, Net is used to calculate the permitted size of multi-unit residential buildings, like townhouse and apartment buildings. The changes mean that common areas like hallways, elevators, stairwells, and maintenance/mechanical rooms no longer count towards the calculation of Floor Space Ratio (FSR). In addition, the amount of common indoor amenity area that is exempt has increased from 100 m² to 300 m².

Floor Area, Gross is used to calculate the permitted size of Single Detached Dwellings and Duplexes. The changes mean that up to 30 m² of attached garage no longer counts when calculating the maximum permitted size of a building.

In addition, floor area for all building types is now measured from the interior face of exterior walls.

These changes result in the ability to build larger buildings than was possible prior to the updates.

Building Height

Some new and updated zones increase the permitted building height for single detached and duplex dwellings to 9.5 metres, where it was previously a maximum of 8.5 m. This means that all single detached houses and duplexes across the city are now allowed to be 9.5 m in height.

Apartment Density (RMM Zone)

Permitted floor area in the RMM Zone has been updated to permit a maximum of 2.5 FSR, regardless of the size of the lot. This means that a building on an RMM zoned property that is larger than 2,500 m² is now permitted more building floor area than before.

Upper Storey Setbacks

Zoning updates remove the requirement that the upper storey of single detached and duplex dwellings in the infill area be limited to a maximum of 80% of the storey directly below.

Secondary Suite Size

Changes to secondary suite regulations update the maximum size (in most zones) from 100 m² to less than 50% of the size of the principal unit to which it is accessory.

For example, if a single detached dwelling is a total of 240 m² then the secondary suite can occupy a maximum of 119 m². This creates more flexibility for secondary suites and may lead to larger suites than were previously allowed.

What if I have an active building permit application?

If you have a building permit application under review but would like to make changes based on the updated regulations you can amend your application. Please review these updates and discuss with the designer, architect, or engineer responsible for preparing your plans.

What if I want to make changes to my issued permit?

If you have been issued a building permit but would like to make changes to take advantage of the updated zoning regulations, you do not need to submit a new application. Please review the updates and discuss with the designer, architect, or engineer responsible for preparing your plans.



Building Permits & Licenses

604-864-5525

building-info@abbotsford.ca

Planning Services

604-864-5510

planning-info@abbotsford.ca

Abbotsford City Hall
32315 South Fraser Way, Abbotsford, BC V2T 1W7



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