

Bill 44 Housing Statutes (Residential Development) Amendment Act mandates that traditional, single-family and duplex zones be replaced by Small Scale Multi-Unit Housing zones by June 30, 2024. These new requirements will typically allow larger and taller buildings with up to four units, and up to six units if located close to frequent transit.

The new rules mean that:

- Single-family homes will still be allowed, in addition to multi-unit housing with increased density
- The District of North Vancouver (DNV) is no longer able to require off-street parking for six-unit developments
- The DNV can no longer hold Public Hearings for residential development applications that meet the requirements under the new rules
- The DNV must prepare a Housing Needs Report by Dec. 31, 2024, and the Official Community Plan (OCP) and Zoning Bylaw must be amended by Dec. 31, 2025.

*Read more about Bill 44
on the provincial
government website:*



Bill 46 Housing Statutes (Development Financing) Amendment Act provides new development finance tools for local governments to help fund the costs of infrastructure, amenities and services, such as water, sewers, transportation network improvements, community centres and daycares.

*Read more about Bill 46
on the provincial
government website:*



Bill 47 Housing Statutes (Transit-Oriented Areas) Amendment Act changes the rules for the development in areas adjacent to major transit hubs, called Transit-Oriented Areas (TOAs), requiring local governments to allow new minimum heights and densities.

In the DNV, the two TOAs are located at Phibbs Bus Exchange and Capilano University Bus Exchange.

- Within 200 metres of a major transit hub, the minimum allowable height is 12 storeys
- Between 200 and 400 metres of a major transit hub, the minimum allowable height is eight storeys

*Read more about Bill 47
on the provincial
government website:*



Local context

In the District, municipal road and utility services were constructed based on engineering standards of the day and did not account for the capacity needs of small-scale multi-unit housing or the current transportation and environmental objectives. While some areas of the District are well-positioned to service small-scale multi-unit housing and even denser housing forms, not all areas are.

Development in our community has been carefully planned to take into account our Official Community Plan, geographic constraints, transportation limitations, and the surrounding natural environment.

Increased demand for housing has been a driving force behind Council initiatives that sought community input, such as approving infill housing where appropriate with units like secondary suites and coach houses. This approach to infill housing enabled us to add density to our single-family neighbourhoods without dramatically changing the neighbourhood's character, which residents told us was important.

Of course, while the District has added more homes to the community, the whole region has grown. On the North Shore, many infrastructure elements – bridges, roads, parks, and schools, for example – have been challenged to keep pace with this growth.

The multi-layered challenge before us is how to increase the number of homes to address the housing demands in our region now mandated by law in BC given our local context.

Path forward

The province has announced it is looking to add 230,000 new housing units throughout B.C.

Our work has shown that we can address the immediate number of units mandated by the Province, while concentrating the growth in areas where we know increased density makes most sense and already meets with community expectations, such as in and around existing Town Centres.

We will continue to work towards balancing the goals of the legislation, our OCP and community goals, and varying resident perspectives – with respect to where growth and various housing types make sense in our community.

Exemptions as allowed by the Province

Not all single-family properties will be eligible for increased density under the legislation. The provincial legislation has permitted the following exceptions to the application of Small Scale Multi Unit Housing Zones in residential areas:

1. Lots larger than one acre
2. Certain heritage designations
3. Lots that are currently unserved
4. Lots outside the Urban Containment Boundary
5. And lots that may be limited by some hazardous conditions

Many of these exemptions are relevant to the District at some level, but the most significant are the properties limited by hazardous conditions.

Mitigating community risk

The District has a long history of assessing natural hazards and mitigating risk to the community, such as constructing debris flow barriers to protect vulnerable areas, and through careful consideration how and where development is done through our Development Permit Areas (DPAs).

The intent of DPAs is to protect people in our community from hazardous conditions in areas that may have a heightened level of susceptibility, and these are outlined in our current OCP.

Three of these hazard DPAs in particular – wildfire hazards, creek hazards, and slope hazards – are relevant to the discussion of adding more density, and more people, to areas already defined as high risk.

Therefore, in reviewing the requirements under Bill 44 for small-scale multi-family housing (SSMUH), and the permissible exemptions from the Province, we are recommending the land parcels currently subject to one or more of the three DPAs in place for natural hazards also be identified as our exempted land parcels to SSMUH.

Our work to assess and monitor natural hazards will continue as conditions change and we learn more about the risks and impacts within the context of the future vision of our community. As our understanding of the risks evolves, so will the application of exemptions we attribute to certain land parcels.

Next steps

The District is committed to doing our part to help address the provincial housing situation. These sweeping changes mandated by the Province need to be endorsed by Council through new zoning bylaws by June 30, 2024.

Other key dates include:

- Complete interim Housing Needs Report by December 31, 2024
- Complete updates to the OCP and zoning bylaws by December 31, 2025