



# ZONING

for a well-designed city

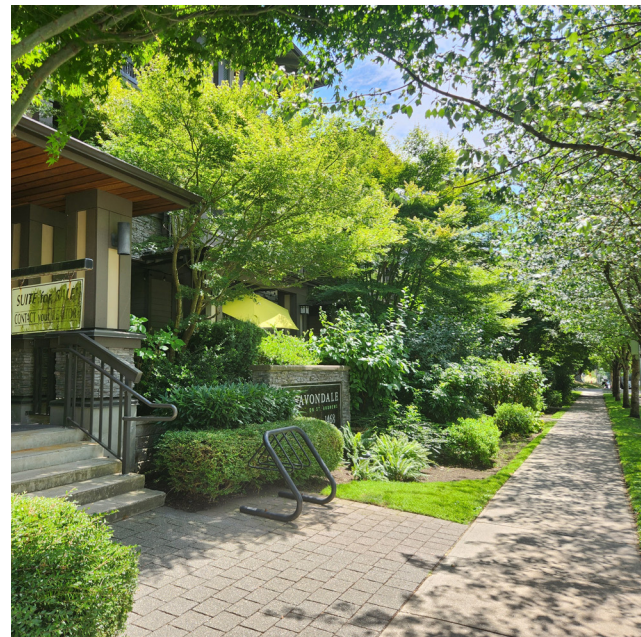
## Zoning Bylaw Update Background 7

# Zoning for a Well-Designed City

The City of North Vancouver continues to grow and change, and our Zoning Bylaw needs to change too. We are currently in the process of updating our Zoning Bylaw to be clearer, more effective, and easier to use.

This backgrounder provides an overview of the City's existing Zoning Bylaw and explains how a new Zoning Bylaw has the potential to support a well-designed City.

This backgrounder is one in a series of eight, you can find them all on our project webpage at [cnv.org/zoningupdate](http://cnv.org/zoningupdate).



## Zoning for a Well-designed City

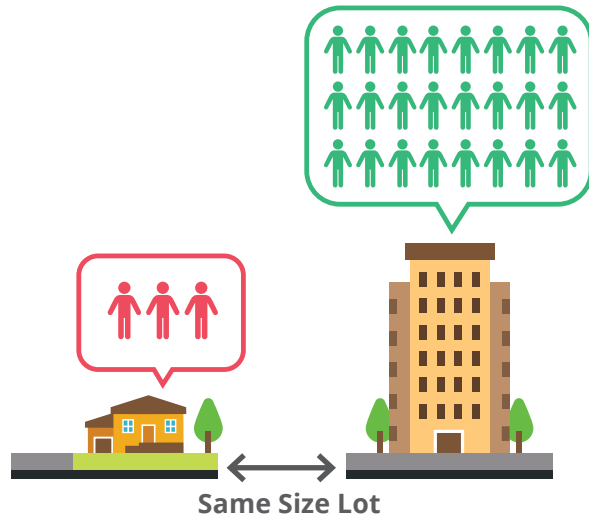
Popular public spaces in our city such as Lower Lonsdale and the Shipyards show how urban design can improve one's experience in an urban environment by offering interesting things to do and see.



A new Zoning Bylaw can set clear regulations for welcoming and vibrant places, including the shape of buildings, the kinds of building materials used, and requirements for indoor and outdoor gathering areas. In addition, thinking carefully about density can help us maximize the land available in the City of North Vancouver. Zoning bylaws also provide limits of Gross Floor Area (GFA) on specific sites. In setting the GFA limits, we will consider the needs of our growing population to ensure new development is able to serve our community's needs. Zoning bylaws can also support the development of mixed-use buildings in key locations, creating new destinations and services closer to the places where people live and work, improving walkability.

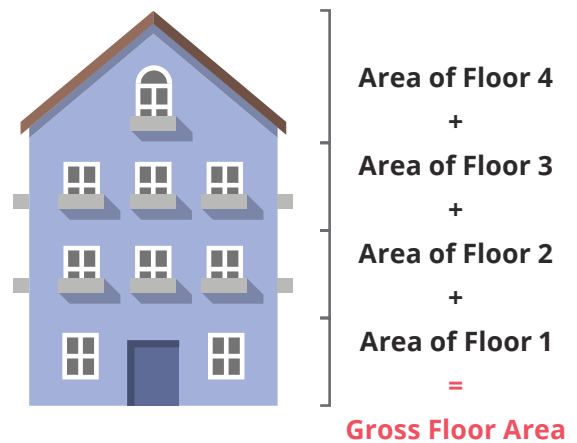
### Density

The City of North Vancouver defines **density** as “the ratio of the building size to the lot size. By increasing density, less land is used to house more people.”



### Gross Floor Area (GFA)

The City of North Vancouver defines **gross floor area (GFA)** as the “total area of all the floors in each building on a lot.”



*City of North Vancouver Zoning Bylaw, 1995, No. 6700*

## Zoning & Equity

In planning for a well-designed City, it is important that spaces are accessible for people of all ages and abilities, including children and seniors. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) defines “universal design” as “the ability to live in one’s home and community safely, independently and comfortably regardless of age, income or ability level” in [Developing a Housing Strategy for an Age-Friendly Community](#) (pg. 6).

A new Zoning Bylaw presents an opportunity to explore how principles of universal design can be integrated to create a more equitable City for our growing and aging population. It is also important that new urban design guidance supports equitable design outcomes in the public’s experience of new streets, sidewalks, buildings, parks and open spaces.

## Context

Our city is known for well designed spaces.

Newer places such as The Shipyards are enjoyed by residents and visitors from across the Lower Mainland as a destination offering rich experiences with lots to see and do. During COVID-19, Lower and Central Lonsdale were adapted to include patio extensions to allow people to enjoy more outdoor dining. In doing so, the street had a renewed sense of community and gathering that is created through placemaking initiatives.

Today, while the City promotes design excellence, the current Zoning Bylaw has few regulations that set out urban design guidance. Most often these are included in tailored, site- or area-specific regulations.

Good urban design adds value to existing properties and new development. In [The Value of Urban Design \(2001\)](#), research by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment suggests that benefits of good urban design can result in:

- enjoyment of public spaces for free;
- differentiating places;
- healthy competition and place marking dividend;
- creative, attractive living environments, including through mixed-uses;
- contribute to a more content and productive workforce; and
- reduced management, maintenance, energy and security costs.

Through the Zoning Bylaw Update, we are transitioning to the use of form-based rules that regulate how buildings take shape first and their uses second. With this approach, it is important that we plan carefully for the relationship between buildings, open spaces and how they impact the pedestrian experience to create vibrant, healthy and inclusive complete communities across the City of North Vancouver.



Fun Alley is an example of a placemaking initiative in North Vancouver.

# Existing Objectives, Goals and Directions

## Official Community Plan

The City's Official Community Plan (OCP) outlines goals and objectives about development patterns, including the importance of design in enhancing liveability.

- As explained in the OCP, an example of a measure to enhance liveability is to ensure future development is compatible with the City's existing built form.



## Mobility Strategy

The City of North Vancouver's Mobility Strategy offers a vision for creating 'healthy streets that work for everyone'.

- Theme Two of the Strategy outlines the goal of improving residents' mobility experience through the design of streets and neighbourhoods. This includes reclaiming more street space for people and nature which can support sustainable mobility through how we grow and develop.
- The way in which development occurs in the City can play a critical role in residents' mobility experiences including reducing the distance between destinations, making it easier to use sustainable mobility choices, or working with developers to provide more options for residents through Transportation Demand Management.
- While the Mobility Strategy sets priorities for different streets in the City, the Zoning Bylaw determines how buildings frame and respond to the street. Considering this relationship, requirements for buildings

## Other Related Policies and Guidelines

The City of North Vancouver has several policies and guidelines such as the Active Design Guidelines and Sustainable Development Guidelines that are used to guide Council decisions on development applications. Through the Zoning Bylaw Update, there is an opportunity to incorporate some of the City's design and development guidelines into zoning requirements.



# Unlocking Opportunities with a New Zoning Bylaw

Creating a Zoning Bylaw presents a generational opportunity to provide greater clarity about the importance of urban design in future development.

Modern zoning bylaws that set out clear expectations for quality urban design allow for more predictability for developers and residents alike. This type of zoning is quickly becoming a best practice for large cities like Miami, to medium sized cities like Cincinnati, Buffalo, and closer to home, Laval Quebec, and High River and Beaumont, Alberta.

Some issues and opportunities that we can explore in the new Zoning Bylaw include:

- using a form-based bylaw with a greater focus on how buildings frame the street and other public spaces, being mindful of things such as light access, setbacks, smaller tower footprints, and building separation;
- identifying building forms and design elements that complement the different street types in our City to improve the way buildings and streets work together;
- using design regulations to ensure quality materials are used for development as well as articulation to create greater interest;
- ensuring that new development does not impede access to public space, and that neighbourhoods are walkable while lighting and visibility support public safety;
- increasing the role of amenities such as rooftop greenspaces, pet-friendly spaces, community gardens and spaces for play and placemaking;
- ensuring that buildings on our key shopping streets, such as Lonsdale and Esplanade feature highly visual ground floors with windows and doors opening onto the sidewalk; and
- increasing the amount and quality of overhead weather protection to make life easier in our rainy seasons.

A form-based bylaw – with its use of diagrams and illustrations – can make it easier to understand urban design expectations and directions. Creating these spaces will require working collaboratively with residents, developers and community organizations.

Let's work together to create a new Zoning Bylaw for the City of North Vancouver that works for all of us.



## Stay Informed

For more information on this exciting initiative, please visit the Zoning Bylaw Update [project webpage](#) and subscribe to our mailing list.

### Links To Related Policies + Background Documents

- [City of North Vancouver Strategic Plan \(2018\)](#)
- [Active Design Guidelines \(2015\)](#)
- [City of North Vancouver Official Community Plan \(2014\)](#)



city  
of north  
vancouver