

Attachment 1

Provincial Press Release Regarding Transit Oriented Development

- Skip to main content
- Skip to footer

British Columbia News

Legislation introduced to deliver more homes near transit hubs

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/29825>

Building more homes near transit hubs is the focus of new proposed legislation aimed at speeding up the delivery of homes and encouraging more communities near the transit, services and amenities that make life better for people.

“Building more homes near transit is good for people, communities, and helps make the most of transit, infrastructure and services,” said Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Housing. “But layers of regulations and outdated rules are stopping this kind of development from becoming a reality in too many municipalities. That’s why we are taking action to remove barriers and deliver more transit-oriented communities, faster.”

This legislation, if passed, will build on work underway to facilitate more transit-oriented development, create more livable communities and tackle the housing crisis. Earlier this year as part of Budget 2023, the Province committed approximately \$400 million to deliver thousands of units at or near transit over the next 10 to 15 years by accessing land that is suitable to be acquired near transit hubs and transforming it into thriving communities.

“We’re working to leverage public lands to build more affordable housing in connected, livable communities,” said Rob Fleming, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. “This legislation is the next step forward to help remove roadblocks and fast-track more transit-oriented development that works for people in their communities.”

In some cases in B.C., higher-density neighbourhoods have been established around transit hubs, but in other cases, restrictive zoning bylaws and parking requirements, along with delayed development approvals, continue to slow down the delivery of homes and services near transit hubs. As B.C. continues to invest significantly in transit infrastructure, it is important that this investment accommodates additional housing units to create vibrant and livable neighbourhoods.

The proposed legislation will require municipalities to designate Transit Oriented Development Areas (TOD Areas) near transit hubs. These TOD Areas are defined as land within 800 metres of a rapid transit station (e.g., SkyTrain station) and within 400 metres of a bus exchange where passengers transfer from one route to another (e.g., Newton Bus Exchange in Surrey).

In these designated TOD Areas, municipalities will be required to:

- permit housing developments that meet provincial standards for allowable height and density. The minimum allowable height and density is based on tiers – at its highest in the centre of the TOD Area – and will differ based on the type of transit hub (SkyTrain stop/bus exchange) and a municipality’s size, population and location. Note: A full list of intended allowable standards is available in a backgrounder.
- remove restrictive parking minimums and allow for parking to be determined by need and demand on a project-by-project basis.
- utilize standards and details in the provincial policy manual to provide consistency in the approach to developing TOD Areas.

Municipalities will still be able to require builders and developers to add parking to accommodate people living with disabilities. Commercial parking requirements will not be affected within TOD Areas. Builders and developers will be able to build as much parking as desired for a project but will not be required to meet a minimum standard of parking units

or parking units.

Modelling future scenarios cannot account for unforeseen circumstances, the changing nature of housing, real-estate markets and other factors, but preliminary analysis indicates the Province could see approximately 100,000 new units in TOD Areas in B.C. during the next 10 years.

To support the legislation, the Province will create a provincial policy manual to support municipalities with setting their site standards and moving forward with proposed housing projects.

Following the release of regulations and the policy manual in December 2023, the lands that local governments have designated for transit-oriented growth in their official community plans will be immediately captured under the new minimum allowable density requirements included in the legislation.

For the remaining TOD Areas that require local government designation, municipalities will have until June 30, 2024, to designate these areas (pending regulation). It is expected that approximately 100 TOD Areas will be designated in approximately 30 municipalities throughout B.C. within the first year of the new legislation coming into effect.

Where a local government's current zoning allows for less density than the new provincial minimum, the new increased minimum density must be allowed by the local government. However, local governments can approve higher density at their discretion.

This proposed legislation will advance alongside the proposed small-scale, multi-unit housing legislation (SSMU). While SSMU will add increased density near transit stops, TOD Areas that have higher density will take precedence over SSMU zoning should they overlap.

This legislation is part of the Province's Homes for People action plan. Announced in spring 2023, the plan builds on historic action to deliver housing since 2017, and sets out further actions to deliver the homes people need faster, while creating more vibrant communities throughout B.C.

Learn More:

For a summary of Backgrounder 3 and the policy framework, visit: https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/TOD_Areas_PolicyFramework.pdf
(https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/TOD_Areas_PolicyFramework.pdf)

To read the Homes for People action plan, visit: https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Homes_For_People.pdf
(https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Homes_For_People.pdf)

To learn about the steps the Province is taking to tackle the housing crisis and deliver affordable homes for British Columbians, visit: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/housing/> (<https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/housing/>)

To learn more about local government housing initiatives, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/local-governments-and-housing/housing-initiatives> (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/local-governments-and-housing/housing-initiatives>)

For more information about B.C. legislation, visit: <https://workingforyou.gov.bc.ca/legislation>
(<https://workingforyou.gov.bc.ca/legislation>)

Three backgrounders follow.
Ministry of Housing

Media Relations
236 478-0251

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Media Relations

250 356-8241

Backgrounders

Facts about housing and transit

- This project is part of a \$19-billion housing investment by the B.C. government.
- Since 2017, the Province has nearly 77,000 homes delivered or underway.
- B.C. is significantly expanding access to public transit.
- Once Broadway Subway, and Surrey-Langley SkyTrain are completed, B.C.'s SkyTrain network will increase by 27%.
- Budget 2023 commits \$394 million for the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to purchase land near transit hubs for TOD Area development.
- In spring 2022, government amended the Transportation Act to enable the Province to acquire land for housing and community services near SkyTrain stations and transit exchange.
- Earlier this fall, the Province put forward \$51 million in capacity funding to support local governments' work to update their processes to meet new requirements to accelerate approval processes and build the homes people need.

What people are saying about housing and transit

Meghan Lahti, mayor, City of Port Moody –

“The creation of walkable, connected neighbourhoods in proximity to transit is a priority for Port Moody council and this direction from the Province will assist in achieving this goal. With this said, we hope that municipalities will retain the ability to approve proposals based on their existing policy frameworks with respect to climate resilience, increasing access to jobs and services, affordable housing options and urban design considerations to name a few.”

Tom Dyas, mayor, City of Kelowna –

“Positioning housing density proximate to accessible transit is smart planning and good policy. It’s why, for example, our recent OCP update in Kelowna was developed in tandem with our transportation master plan. Residents need diverse and affordable housing options that also make it easy to get to work, school and appointments. We look forward to continued collaboration with the Province to ensure there are investments in transit infrastructure that will support the housing objectives needed in our growing communities.”

Ken Sim, mayor, City of Vancouver –

“Investing in homes near transit hubs aligns with our shared vision for a sustainable future. We appreciate the Province moving forward with legislation that seeks to enable more housing and we look forward to working with the Province to implement these new regulations in a thoughtful way. Make no mistake, our goal is to deliver more housing faster and we look forward to understanding the opportunities and impacts of this new legislation.”

Jill Atkey, CEO, BC Non-Profit Housing Association –

“This legislation has the potential to unlock new sites for affordable housing development by reducing time and approval barriers for non-profit housing providers. Allowing non-profit housing developers to determine parking minimums on new developments based on the actual needs of their tenants will reduce costs and, ultimately, rents.”

Anne McMullin, president and CEO, Urban Development Institute (UDI) —

“We see this legislation as a pivotal turning point with the potential to significantly accelerate the pace of home construction in areas where growth is most needed and can be best accommodated. For years, the UDI has advocated for maximizing the billions of dollars of investments made by senior governments in our rapid transit system. Transit-oriented development will help us achieve other societal objectives: streamlined and more affordable commuting between work, home and other destinations; decreased greenhouse gas emissions; and the cultivation of vibrant and healthier communities as people can walk or cycle to meet their daily needs.”

Mike Moffatt, founding director, the PLACE Centre –

“Outdated zoning rules and parking minimums increase the costs and reduce the number of homes that can be built, driving up rents and home prices for families. With this legislation, which will make transit-oriented development a reality, British Columbia has created a best-in-Canada model for other provinces to emulate.”

Rory Kulmala, CEO, Vancouver Island Construction Association –

“We welcome any initiatives that look to reduce red tape and to accelerate increasing housing development on Vancouver Island, particularly around transit-oriented hubs and multi-modal transportation corridors. In doing so, it reduces congestion, promotes sustainability and enhances accessibility for all, while fostering healthier and more connected communities, while creating a more efficient, equitable and vibrant urban environment.”

Peter Edgar, CEO, Edgar Development –

“It’s time to make it easier to build complete, transit-oriented communities and create the types of livable cities that people want to be part of. The time and cost associated with getting multi-unit housing near transit approved and built is prohibitively long. Making it faster to build mixed-use, higher-density communities within walking distance of transit is going to create the kind of sustainable, diverse housing options Vancouver so desperately needs.”

Dak Molnar, managing director, Molnar Group –

“The way it’s set up now, the rezoning process to build multi-unit rental buildings around transit often takes years, even with city councils on board. This legislation will help speed up the process so developers can add the much-needed types of housing and desirable commercial and community amenities that people are looking for, within walking distance from transit.”

Owen Brady, director, Abundant Housing Vancouver –

“Legalizing apartments around our public-transit investments will improve affordability and support sustainable planning. More housing near rapid transit means more people will be able to live here without a car. Many-decades-old SkyTrain stations are still surrounded by single-family homes, but it is important for B.C.’s economy, the environment and affordability that we use the land around our multi-billion-dollar public-transit investments intensively and equitably.”

Tom Green, senior climate policy adviser, David Suzuki Foundation –

“We are very encouraged that in addition to much needed housing, transit-oriented development will lead to complete, vibrant communities. Increasing the housing around transit stations will mean easier access to transit to encourage use, opening the door for more people to live a lower-carbon, sustainable lifestyle.”

Shaun St-Amour, vice-president of operations, Clay Construction Inc. –

“By allowing more homes to be built around transit hubs, British Columbians will have more affordable living options. Transportation and buildings play a major role in tackling our climate emergency, so today’s alignment of policies creates the necessary synergies for better buildings, sustainable and efficient transportation, and diverse and vibrant communities.”

Rick Jeffery, president and CEO, Canadian Wood Council –

“We applaud the B.C. government’s new legislation to expedite higher-density housing near transit hubs in communities across the province. British Columbia’s ongoing excellence in the global production of high-quality lumber and engineered wood products remains pivotal in advancing sustainable housing. Its versatility, affordability and environmentally low-carbon properties are distinguishing factors in shaping the future of eco-friendly construction. It’s not just about building homes; it’s about building communities that enrich people’s lives with convenience and sustainability.”

Standards for Transit Oriented Development Areas

Many of the specific standards for Transit Oriented Development Areas (TOD Areas), including minimum densities, will be confirmed by policy and regulation.

Note: Where a local government’s current zoning allows for less density than the new provincial minimum, the provincial minimum must be allowed. Local governments can still approve higher density at their discretion.

The intent for future policy and regulations includes the following:

- Two types of provincially designated TOD Areas at Transit Hubs
 - within 800 metres of a rapid transit stations (SkyTrain)
 - within 400 metres of a bus exchange where passengers transfer from one route to another
- Permitted density within TOD Areas based on:
 - type of transit hub (rapid transit/bus exchange)
 - proximity to the transit hub station
 - a municipality’s population, geographic location and overall housing market broken down into three TOD Area types
- The three TOD Area types:
 - Type 1A: Rapid transit hubs in Metro Vancouver
 - Type 1B: Bus exchanges in Metro Vancouver
 - Type 2: Bus exchanges in the Capital Region, Kelowna and other medium sized municipalities
 - Type 3: Bus exchanges in smaller sized municipalities

Floor area ratio (FAR) is the total amount of usable floor area that can be developed relative to the size of the lot. The higher the permitted floor area ratio on a lot, the more housing units will be permitted on that lot.

- In Type 1A (SkyTrain stations) in Metro Vancouver, it is intended that municipalities will be expected to permit residential developments in TOD Areas using the following density criteria:
 - prescribed distance of 200 metres or less from a rapid-transit hub – minimum density up to 5.0 FAR, minimum height up to 20 storeys.
 - prescribed distance of 201 metres to 400 metres from a rapid-transit hub – minimum density up to 4.0 FAR, minimum height up to 12 storeys.
 - prescribed distance of 401 metres to 800 metres from a rapid-transit hub – minimum density up to 3.0 FAR, minimum height up to eight storeys.
- In Type 1B (Bus exchanges) in Metro Vancouver, it is intended that municipalities will be expected to permit residential development in TOD Areas using the following density criteria:
 - prescribed distance of 200 metres or less of a bus exchange – minimum density up to 4.0 FAR, minimum height up to 12 storeys.
 - prescribed distance of 201 metres to 400 metres of bus exchange – minimum density up to 3.0 FAR, minimum height up to eight storeys.
- In Type 2, it is intended that in the Capital Region, Kelowna and other medium-sized communities, municipalities will be expected to permit residential development in TOD Areas using the following density criteria:

- prescribed distance of 200 metres or less of a bus exchange – minimum density up to 3.5 FAR, minimum allowable height up to 10 storeys.
- prescribed distance of 201 metres to 400 metres of bus exchange – minimum density up to 2.5 FAR, minimum height up to six storeys.
- In Type 3, in other qualifying municipalities, it is intended that transit hubs that meet the service requirements, municipalities will be expected to permit residential development in TOD Areas using the following density criteria:
 - prescribed distance of 200 metres or less of a bus exchange – minimum density up to 2.5 FAR, minimum allowable height up to six storeys.
 - prescribed distance of 201 metres to 400 metres of bus exchange – minimum density up to 1.5 FAR, minimum allowable height up to four storeys.

This will apply only to residential or mixed residential land use, meaning that properties that are zoned for commercial, agricultural (Agricultural Land Reserve) and industrial land uses will not apply. Federally regulated properties, such as the Vancouver International Airport, are exempt, as are First Nations reserve lands.

Translations

- MoreHomesNearTransitHubs_Chinese(simplified).pdf
([https://govbcnews.azureedge.net/translations/releases/2023HOUS0063-001748/MoreHomesNearTransitHubs_Chinese\(simplified\).pdf](https://govbcnews.azureedge.net/translations/releases/2023HOUS0063-001748/MoreHomesNearTransitHubs_Chinese(simplified).pdf))
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- MoreHomesNearTransitHubs_Vietnamese.pdf
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Acknowledgment

The B.C. Public Service acknowledges the territories of First Nations around B.C. and is grateful to carry out our work on these lands. We acknowledge the rights, interests, priorities, and concerns of all

Indigenous Peoples - First Nations, Métis, and Inuit - respecting and acknowledging their distinct cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments.