



City of Delta  
COUNCIL REPORT  
Regular Meeting

To: **Council**

File No.: **P25-15**

From: **Development Department**

Date: **April 27, 2026**

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**Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Phase 2 – Update and Next Steps**

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The following report has been reviewed and endorsed by the City Manager's Office.

▪ **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the community engagement summary for small-scale multi-unit housing updates in Attachment E be received into the record.

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▪ **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to share findings of recent engagement on potential zoning amendments to support small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) in Delta, and provide an update on next steps.

Feedback received differed between the general public and the development community. General feedback suggested broader opposition to growth and the pace of recent change, while the development community expressed concern about the impacts of the larger lot size requirement and the maintaining of existing lot coverage regulations. Because of this disparity, staff will continue to monitor how the existing set of regulations supports SSMUH development and will develop a new standalone houseplex zone for future consideration by Council.

▪ **BACKGROUND:**

On June 24, 2024, Council adopted changes to Delta's Zoning Bylaws to permit SSMUH on all single-detached and duplex lots in the city, as required by the Province under Bill 44. These changes allowed developers and homeowners to submit building permit applications for single detached homes, duplexes, secondary suites, detached garden suites, and coach houses without the need for a rezoning application or other Council approvals.

On January 10, 2025, Delta received a letter from the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs, urging Delta to reconsider how the Zoning Bylaw could more closely align with the Provincial Site Standards for SSMUH (Attachment A). Concurrently, staff provided Council with an update at the February 3, 2025 Regular Meeting on the progress of SSMUH, as well as laying out future work to be undertaken at Council's direction. This report describes the results of that work to date.

▪ **DISCUSSION:**

The adoption of SSMUH changes was well received by the development community and contributed to a growth in housing applications, in particular with new duplexes, coach houses, and garden suites. From June 25, 2024 to December 31, 2025, Delta issued building permits for 786 SSMUH units:

Single detached dwellings	164 units
Duplex dwellings	138 units
Secondary suites	315 units
Coach houses and garden suites	169 units

Of particular note are the number of permits issued for duplexes, coach houses, and garden suites. Duplex and coach house construction was extremely limited previously, and garden suites were only introduced as a permitted form in June 2024.

**Five Key Changes Presented:**

Since the adoption of SSMUH regulations, staff identified five key changes to the Zoning Bylaw in response to new provincial direction while also addressing concerns from the community related to livability and neighbourhood impacts. These changes would be limited to properties within the Small Scale Residential (SSR) land use designation in the Official Community Plan (OCP) (identified as subject properties in Attachment B). Making changes to properties in other land use designations would be inconsistent with the OCP. The changes, as presented to the community for feedback, are listed below. Further details about each of the five key changes are provided in Attachment C.

**1. Add Houseplexes as a Permitted Use**

Under Delta’s current SSMUH regulations, developments are limited to single detached dwellings, duplexes, and accessory dwelling units such as secondary suites, garden suites, and coach houses. Adding houseplexes (three or four principal dwelling units in a single building on a lot) would offer a new path to homeownership while maintaining regulations with respect to height, site coverage, setbacks and parking similar to those for a house or duplex.

**2. Increase Height by One Metre**

A height increase is presented that would not allow for additional storeys, but would allow for basements to be shallower and brighter with larger windows and fewer stairs, increasing the livability of a basement secondary suite. It would also reduce excavation and pumping costs associated with deeper basements, along with environmental benefits like reduced concrete usage and decreased impacts on groundwater recharge and flows. In areas where basements are impractical (such as Ladner and parts of Tsawwassen), the additional height would allow for extra living space in an attic.

**3. Standardize Small Scale Residential Zones**

Consolidation into one new standard zone (R1 - SSMUH) would simplify regulations and make it easier to build more housing in Delta’s Small Scale Residential areas. If a proposal meets the regulations described in the zone, an applicant could proceed directly to building permit without the need for rezoning approvals. A draft of this new zone is available in Attachment D.

#### **4. Remove Floor Space Ratio (FSR) Regulations**

Floor area rules for SSMUH in Delta are a complex mix of zone-specific floor space ratio (FSR) maximums and exemptions. Achievable FSR is also regulated by height, setback, and lot coverage requirements. Removing FSR would give applicants greater flexibility to design homes that make better use of the site and respond to market demand, while still adhering to established zoning standards – such as setbacks, height limits, and lot coverage – that help maintain neighbourhood character.

#### **5. Increase Minimum Lot Dimensions for Subdivision**

The current size of properties permitted through subdivision results in lots that are too small to effectively accommodate the four units required by the Province. The new minimum lot size as presented is intended to better support four-unit developments, allowing for functional site layouts that incorporate on- and off-street parking while preserving space for tree canopy and meaningful landscaping – key elements in maintaining a livable and attractive neighbourhood.

### **Community Engagement Summary – What We Heard:**

Delta conducted a community engagement program to ensure awareness of SSMUH changes being considered and to provide an opportunity for feedback. From November 1 through November 30, 2025, staff received feedback from the public and development community on the presented changes. Staff also held three engagement events in November: two public open houses on November 20 and 26, and one session for developers on November 24. In total, approximately 160 people engaged with staff at these sessions. Further, a survey available at these sessions and online received 448 responses from the general public and 378 from the Delta Insights Panel for a total of 826 responses. A summary of the responses is available in Attachment E.

- **Who Participated** - Participants were predominantly homeowners, making up approximately 90% of respondents. Many participants were long-term residents, with 62% having lived in Delta for more than 20 years.
- **Geographic Representation** - Open feedback responses were largely concentrated in North Delta (74%), likely influenced by recent development concerns in that area. In contrast, the Delta Insights Panel responses were more evenly distributed, with representation from North Delta (38%), Ladner (24%), and Tsawwassen (38%).
- **Interest in SSMUH** - Neighbourhood impacts were the primary area of interest, with over 70% of participants identifying neighbourhood change as their main concern. About half of respondents expressed interest in how SSMUH may affect housing options, while fewer than 10% indicated interest in purchasing or renting a home.
- **Awareness of SSMUH** - Awareness levels were described as moderate to high, with 56% of participants indicating they were somewhat familiar with the province's direction to allow SSMUH and 35% reporting they were very familiar.
- **Attitudes towards SSMUH** - Participants identified several perceived benefits of SSMUH, including the potential to increase housing affordability, support multi-generational living, and create more livable units. However, concerns were more prominent, particularly regarding increased traffic congestion, strain on street parking, and impacts on local services and infrastructure.

- **Preferred Priorities** - Participants indicated that the City should prioritize parking and traffic management, maintaining neighbourhood character, and environmental sustainability when considering SSMUH-related changes.
- **Delta's Approach** - While some participants supported the City's direction, broader concerns about growth and the pace of change influenced overall perceptions. About 39% felt the approach was on the right track or required minor adjustments, while 54% indicated it needs more work.
- **General Comments** - Participants raised several recurring themes, including the need to address infrastructure capacity, strengthen design controls such as height and setbacks, and focus higher density near town centres, major roads, and transit corridors rather than within established residential neighbourhoods. Additional concerns included skepticism about improvements to housing affordability, the importance of retaining mature trees, and the complexity of the proposed changes.
- **Delta Insights Panel** - Responses from the Delta Insights Panel were generally more supportive of the City's approach, with support levels 16% higher than those observed among North Delta respondents. Higher opposition in North Delta is likely linked to recent concerns regarding increasing density and tree retention.

Since the introduction of the provincial housing mandate, Delta has observed an increase in public opposition to new regulations that support additional density in neighbourhoods. General feedback suggests broader opposition to growth, and the pace of recent change influenced many responses. Feedback from the development community generally focused on business impacts of changes to minimum lot sizes for subdivision as small lot development to accommodate single detached dwellings is still desirable in Delta. Developers also commented that the 40% site coverage presented is too restrictive.

During the engagement process, a petition from 35 signatories in the Dawson Crescent area was received, showing support to change the properties in that area from the existing Single Detached Residential 4A Zone (RS4A, a restricted density zone) to the Single Detached Residential 1 Zone (RS1).

#### **Next Steps:**

Staff have presented SSMUH updates that meet the Provincial housing mandate while maintaining the livability of Delta neighbourhoods. However, the presented changes were not well received by residents due to broader opposition to growth, and have raised concerns within the development community. With no clear consensus, staff will continue monitoring SSMUH development trends, develop opportunities to increase understanding of current SSMUH regulations, further evaluate feedback received to date, and report back in 2027.

The development of a standardized SSMUH zone that includes a houseplex as a permitted use and the consolidation of Delta's single detached (RS) and duplex (RD) zones are included in the amended Action Plan for Delta's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) application. In order to fulfill the requirements of the Action Plan and receive full funding, the SSMUH-related amendments described in Delta's HAF Action Plan must be completed by May 30, 2026. Staff will continue to work closely with Canada

Mortgage and Housing Corporation to ensure the ongoing success of Delta’s HAF program.

To that end, staff will continue to develop a standalone houseplex zone as part of Delta’s HAF obligations. While rezoning would still be required in SSR neighbourhoods, this new standalone zone would provide clear regulations for applicants and more consistent, predictable outcomes to help minimize neighbourhood impacts.

**Implications:**

Financial Implications – The development of a standardized SSMUH zone and the consolidation of existing single detached and duplex zones is included in Delta’s amended Housing Accelerator Fund application.

Intergovernmental Implications – Delta is under a Provincial Housing Target Order. The presented changes would help to encourage new SSMUH developments, thereby contributing to Delta’s Housing Target.

▪ **CONCLUSION:**

Staff developed and completed engagement on a set of five key changes presented to support the development of small-scale multi-unit housing in Delta. Public feedback largely opposed any changes to SSMUH regulations at this time, while developers raised concerns with increasing the minimum lot dimensions for subdivision and maintaining a 40% lot coverage regulation. Given this, staff will continue to monitor how existing SSMUH regulations support new housing development in Delta and will develop a new standalone houseplex zone. It is recommended that the public engagement summary for small-scale multi-unit housing updates in Attachment E be received into the record.



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This report has been prepared in consultation with the following listed department.

Concurring Department		
Department	Name	Signature
Communications & Engagement	JoAnne Kleb	JK

▪ **ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Letter from Minister Kahlon, dated January 10, 2025
- B. Maps of Subject Properties
- C. The Five Key Changes
- D. Draft R1 Zone
- E. Community Engagement Report