

The Five Key Changes

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.

Houseplexes are a building designed to accommodate three or four principal dwelling units within one building on a single lot, each having their own separate entrances. Houseplexes would differ from townhouses in that they are shorter (2.5 vs 3 storeys with a lower maximum building height), but have the same site constraints (i.e. site coverage, front and rear setbacks, parking requirements, etc) as other SSMUH forms of housing, and could be designed to appear as a large single detached dwelling or duplex. Secondary suites would not be permitted within a houseplex.

Why Permit Houseplexes? Residents have expressed concern that the addition of houseplexes could strain neighbourhood amenities. At the same time, the Province would like Delta to expand housing options. In response, staff have presented the potential to have houseplexes permitted on all SSR properties over 280 m², alongside updates to minimum subdivision standards, building heights, and floor space ratios to ensure new development better fits neighbourhood character. Like townhouses, houseplex units can be stratified and individually owned, offering a new path to homeownership within SSR areas.

2. Increase Height by One Metre

Delta's current regulations include a maximum height of 9.5 m (31.2 ft) for SSMUH developments with pitched roofs. While Provincial Site Standards encourage building heights up to 11 m (36.1 ft) and 3 storeys, staff presented a change to increase this height maximum to 10.5 m (34.4 ft) while keeping the number of storeys limited to 2.5. This increase in height is proposed to be accompanied with a change to the calculation of in-ground basements: currently a minimum of 50% of the basement must be below grade to be considered in-ground and a half-storey. This was presented to be reduced to 33%. Developments with flat roofs would also see an increase in the allowable height to 8.5 m (27.9 ft) from 8.0 m (26.2 ft).

Why Increase Height? A height increase was presented that would not allow for additional storeys but would allow basements to be shallower and brighter with larger windows and fewer stairs that increases 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

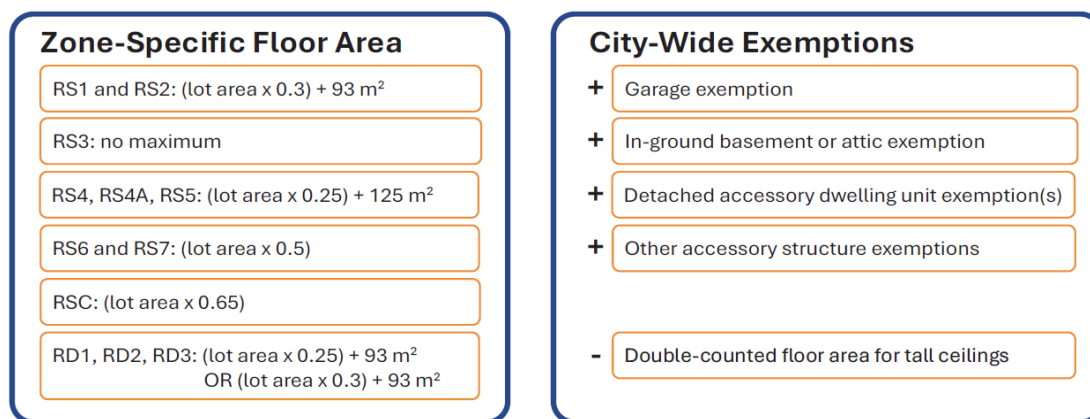
Delta’s Zoning Bylaw contains 12 standard single detached (RS) and duplex (RD) zones, as well as 75 comprehensive development (CD) zones, that permit SSMUH forms of development. These zones all have differences in regulations like lot coverage, floor space ratio (FSR), and setbacks. Staff presented changes to consolidate these zones into one new standard zone that would be applied consistently throughout Delta’s Small Scale Residential neighbourhoods. This new zone, called R1 – Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Zone (Attachment D), would be applied to the properties shown in Attachment B (approximately 20,000 properties).

Under this option as presented, many of the existing RS and RD zones would remain in the Zoning Bylaw as they apply to properties designated for higher density in the OCP. These zones would be moved to a new part of the Zoning Bylaw called “Legacy Zones”, and would not be used for future rezoning applications. Not all of the CD zones would be able to be rezoned to the new zone either, as some are sufficiently different in their regulations that consolidation would excessively reduce the development rights of those properties.

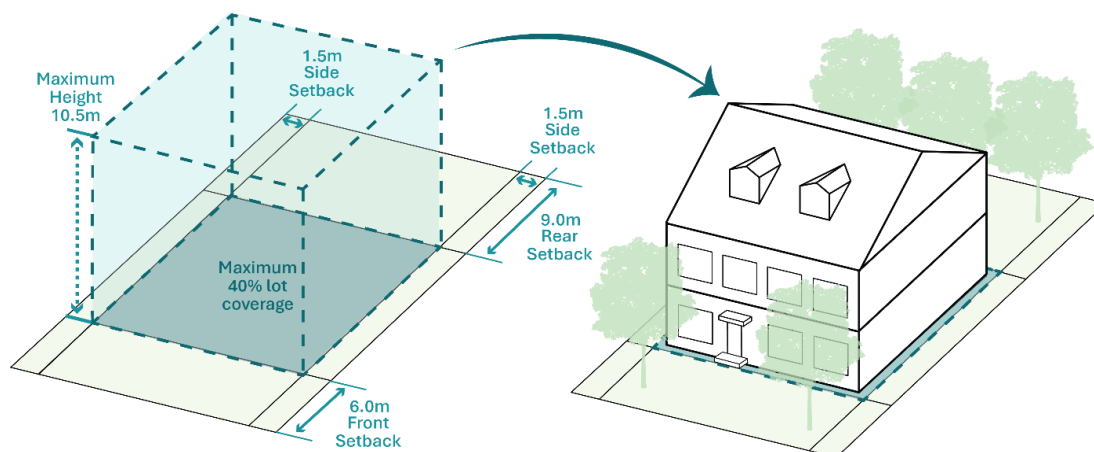
Why Standardize Small Scale Residential Zoning? Consolidation into one new standard R1 - SSMUH zone would simplify regulations and make it easier to build more housing in Delta’s Small Scale Residential areas. If a proposal meets the regulations described in the zone, an applicant could proceed directly to building permit without the need for rezoning approvals.

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.



As part of the new R1 zone, staff presented a change to remove FSR as a regulation. Building size would still be regulated by the three-dimensional box created by setbacks, height, and lot coverage. Density maximums and exemptions in the “Legacy Zones” would remain unchanged.



Why Remove FSR? Delta's current FSR regulations are complex to understand and administer. Removal of FSR would provide applicants more flexibility in house designs that best utilizes the site and meets market demands while still working within standard zoning regulations such as setbacks, height limits and lot coverage to help maintain neighbourhood character.

5. Increase Minimum Lot Dimensions for Subdivision

As required by the Province, all properties over 280 m² that permit single detached or duplex forms of housing must permit a minimum of four units. Delta's typical SSMUH development pattern in recent years has involved rezoning and subdividing existing lots to the RS6 or RS7 zones, which require a minimum lot width of 13 or 11 m (49 or 36 ft), respectively. However, in the Delta context, these smaller lots are not able to reasonably accommodate four units particularly as the majority of neighbourhoods do not have laneways. Development proposals for four units on these smaller lots also often seek variances to lot coverage or setbacks, as it is challenging to build four functionally sized units without regulatory relaxations.

Given this, staff modeled different options for minimum lot size regulations. This exercise sought to balance the need to continue developing housing stock in low density areas with tree retention, on- and off-street parking, lot coverage, and setbacks. Based on the analysis, a 15 m (49.2 ft) minimum width with a 450 m² (4,844 ft²) minimum lot area was determined to be a reasonable middle ground to support SSMUH developments while accommodating neighbourhood compatibility goals. These minimum lot dimensions would only apply to projects seeking to subdivide lots. Developments proposed on existing lots without subdivision would not be restricted by this regulation.

Why Increase 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 would result in lots that can better support four units of 110 to 135 m² (1,184 to 1,453 ft²) each while maintaining a 40% lot coverage. This would ensure there is

space to sustain tree canopy and landscaping, while also providing sufficient space for both on- and off-street parking.