



City of Delta
COUNCIL REPORT
Regular Meeting

To: **Council**

File No.: **P25-12**

From: **Development Department**

Bylaw No.: **8496**

Date: **June 16, 2025**

Civic and Institutional Building Height Zoning Amendment

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

▪ **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT first, second, and third readings be given to Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 8496.

The purpose of this report is to present for Council's consideration Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 8496 (Attachment A), which would update existing maximum height allowances for principal structures in the Health Care (HC) and Public Use (P) Zones in "Delta Zoning Bylaw No. 7600, 2017" (the Zoning Bylaw).

▪ **BACKGROUND:**

The maximum building heights in the HC and P Zones do not reflect current building needs and design conventions of typical civic and institutional projects, including hospitals, recreation centres, and community service buildings. The proposed bylaw amendments would adjust building height allowances to streamline the development of these types of facilities without the need for a height variance.

▪ **DISCUSSION:**

At present, the Zoning Bylaw permits principal structures in the HC Zone (including hospitals, community care facilities, and mental health facilities) and P Zone (including assembly halls, schools, recreation centres, and other civic and community service buildings) to have a maximum of three storeys, and a maximum height of 9.2 m (30 ft). While this maximum height is sufficient for residential structures with standard 2.4 m (8 ft) ceiling heights, non-residential buildings such as hospitals and recreation centres require higher ceilings for operational needs, as well as larger spaces between floors for utilities, ducting, and air circulation. Based on these factors, a typical building within the relevant zones requires heights greater than what is currently permitted in the Zoning Bylaw.

Proposed Building Heights for Health Care (HC) Zone:

Delta's maximum building heights in the HC Zone, intended for hospitals and other health care facilities, are among the lowest of all comparator municipalities in Metro Vancouver (Attachment B). A major upcoming project (long-term care centre at the Delta Hospital site) is expected to need building heights above what is permitted in the Zoning Bylaw. Increasing the building heights would provide the flexibility needed to meet design conventions for hospitals and sufficient clearance for medical equipment. The International Health Facility Guidelines (IHFG) recommend a minimum of 2.7 m (9 ft) ceiling heights for general work and circulation areas in hospitals, 3 m (10 ft) ceiling heights for areas requiring ceiling-mounted equipment such as operating theatres and Intensive Care Units, and 3.2 m (10.5 ft) ceiling heights for loading docks and ambulance bays. These ceiling height guidelines, plus additional plenum and sub-floor space needed for HVAC systems, air circulation, sprinkler systems, and other utilities, mean health care buildings can require an estimated range of 3.5 m (11 ft) to 5 m (16 ft) per storey.

To accommodate the operational needs of this facility and future health care projects, staff propose increasing the maximum height of principal structures in the HC Zone from 9.2 m (30 ft) to 15 m (49 ft) for lots within the Civic and Institutional (CI) designation in the Official Community Plan (OCP). This designation is intended primarily for civic facilities on relatively large lots, where 15 m (49 ft) building heights would be appropriate. To avoid unintended consequences in neighbourhoods and on smaller lots, staff propose keeping maximum height at 9.2 m (30 ft) on lots in designations other than CI, which typically accommodate uses such as neighbourhood clinics and smaller-scale care homes. To ensure consistency between the Zoning Bylaw and the OCP, staff propose eliminating the maximum storey provisions in the HC Zone. The table below outlines the new heights proposed for the HC Zone.

	<i>Principal Structure on a lot with OCP Designation</i>		<i>Accessory Structure</i>
	<i>Civic and Institutional (CI)</i>	<i>Other than Civic and Institutional (CI)</i>	
<i>Maximum height to mid-roof or the top of a flat roof</i>	15 m (49 ft)	9.2 m (30 ft)	3.75 m (12 ft)

This is consistent with regional examples, such as Phase 1 of the Burnaby Hospital Redevelopment Project, which includes a six storey patient facility building with a height of approximately 25.6 m (84 ft), averaging 4.3 m (14 ft) per storey. Based on preliminary designs, the upcoming long-term care centre on the Delta Hospital site will be a three-storey structure that is estimated to require 14 m (46 ft) in height, averaging 4.7 m (15 ft) m per storey.

Proposed Building Heights for Public Use (P) Zone:

Delta's maximum building heights for the P Zone, intended for community and recreation centres, public assembly buildings, and other civic or institutional uses, are also among the lowest of the comparator municipalities (Attachment B). The practical needs of recreation centres tend to require building heights in excess of other uses

allowed in the P Zone. Recreational facility technical guidelines published by the City of Vancouver recommend minimum interior ceiling heights of 2.7 m (9 ft) for general-purpose areas and 3.3 m (11 ft) for fitness rooms. Combined with required space for utilities and air circulation, recreation centres can require anywhere between 3.9 m (13 ft) to 6 m (20 ft) in areas with the lowest clearance requirements. Architectural details tend to add greater heights of 6 m (20 ft) to 9 m (30 ft) per storey for indoor pool areas and gymnasiums. The upcoming Winskill Renewal Project, which includes a two-storey aquatic centre with multiple indoor pools, is expected to require 17 m (56 ft) in height to accommodate programming and operational needs such as a pool area with diving boards, viewing decks, fitness rooms, and substantial space for mechanical equipment, ducting, and HVAC systems that increase the height of the structure above what is currently permitted in the P Zone.

To more accurately reflect the practical needs of buildings with these types of uses, staff propose increasing the maximum height of principal structures within the P Zone on lots designated Civic and Institutional from 9.2 m (30 ft) to 18 m (59 ft). The maximum height on lots with a designation other than Civic and Institutional, which typically include uses such as small civic offices and community assembly halls, will remain at 9.2 m (30 ft). To ensure consistency between the Zoning Bylaw and the OCP, staff propose eliminating maximum storey provisions in the P Zone. The table below outlines the new heights proposed for the P Zone.

	<i>Principal Structure on a lot with OCP Designation</i>		<i>Accessory Structure</i>
	<i>Civic and Institutional (CI)</i>	<i>Other than Civic and Institutional (CI)</i>	
<i>Maximum height to mid-roof or the top of a flat roof</i>	18 m (59 ft)	9.2 m (30 ft)	3.75 m (12 ft)

Other examples of public use buildings locally and regionally further support the need to increase maximum buildings heights. The Ladner Leisure Centre has a height of approximately 13 m (43 ft). The North Delta Centre for the Arts received a variance to increase the allowable height from 9.2 m (30 ft) to 11.3 m (37 ft). The ongoing Marpole-Oakridge Community Centre Redevelopment Project in Vancouver includes a community building with a height of approximately 12.4 m (41 ft), the recently completed tēmәsewtxw Aquatic and Community Centre in New Westminster has a height of approximately 16 m (52 ft), and the Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre in Surrey has an average height of approximately 14.5 m (48 ft). All of these examples are two-storey buildings.

The proposed building height changes would not substantially affect residents near affected lots. The proposed changes affect only lots designated Civic and Institutional, generally reserved for major civic structures on large lots. In addition, many existing health care and public use buildings on such lots, such as the Ladner Leisure Centre, have heights approximating the maximums proposed in this amendment, but previously required a height variance.

Removing the maximum storey provisions in the HC and P Zones will not substantially affect buildings on impacted lots as the number of storeys that can be constructed is still limited by the maximum height regulations.

Public notice of the proposed bylaw amendments is required, and any comments received from members of the public will be included alongside this report.

Relation to Other Zones:

The proposed changes for both the HC and P Zones are consistent with other zones outlined in the Zoning Bylaw. Conventionally, community and civic buildings are expected to be taller than some residential buildings. However, the Zoning Bylaw currently allows for greater maximum building heights for some residential buildings in zones other than the HC and P Zones. The RT62 and RT76 Zones (townhouses) and the RA120 Zone (low-rise apartments) allow maximum heights of 11 m (36 ft).

Implications:

Financial Implications – There are no financial implications to this report.

Intergovernmental Implications – As the proposed building height regulation changes affect properties within 800 m (2,625 ft) of an intersection of a controlled access highway, Bylaw No. 8496 would require approval from the Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT). Should Council give Bylaw No. 8496 first, second, and third readings, staff will forward the bylaw to MOTT for approval.

▪ **CONCLUSION:**

The proposed amendments to Delta's maximum building heights in the P and HC Zones would enable important community-building developments to proceed without the need for variance permits. The amendments would ensure that building heights conform with general expectations of differing building heights for residential and institutional buildings. It is recommended that Bylaw No. 8496 be given first, second, and third readings.



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▪ **ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Bylaw No. 8496
- B. Municipal Review of Building Heights