Bulletin

Area Calculation and Floor Space Ratio/Floor Area Compliance Plans

Effective May 10, 2004
Last amended October 27, 2026
Authority: Director of Planning

CITY OF VANCOUVER

1 ISSUE

City by-laws may regulate certain building and site areas – floor space ratio and site coverage are two examples. It is important to establish consistent approaches when conveying compliance with floor area regulations throughout the application process. This document clarifies the current requirement for FSR/floor area compliance plans which are the principal tool used to demonstrate compliance with area-based regulations.

2 PURPOSE

This document was prepared to:

- provide clear information for client customers; and
- outline standards for accompanying floor area compliance plans.

This initiative seeks to reduce staff review time while creating a demonstrable path towards by-law compliance for applicants with the goal of providing clear, reasonable and predictable decisions.

3 PROCEDURE

The procedures outlined in this document address presentation requirements and not by-law interpretation. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure their proposals comply with the by-law and to fully document compliance in a manner that is verifiable by City staff.

4 REQUIREMENTS –VERIFIABLE COMPLIANCE PLANS

See Section 5 of this bulletin for examples.

4.1 Use Verifiable Area Calculations

Areas must be broken down into regular geometric shapes utilizing perimeter dimensioning. Poly shapes and/or shapes using hypothetical internal dimensioning cannot be accepted since these are unverifiable.

4.2 Calculate the net area using the subtractive method:

Net Area = Gross Area − Excluded Areas

(a) Determine the gross area: Measure the gross area by establishing a box around the entire floor plate to the outermost surface of the exterior walls. The box may include internal and external areas that may later be excluded such as balconies, canopies, amenity etc.

(b) Measure and identify exclusions: Measure all areas within the gross area box that are excluded from the floor area, such as applicable external areas, balconies, and roof decks.

(c) Subtract all permitted excluded areas from the gross subject area to determine the net area.

4.3 Provide table of calculations:

A table of calculations must accompany all floor area compliance submissions. The table must include the length, width, total area and identification of each block, proposed exclusions, and net floor area for each use in the area summation.

Storage

For projects that are utilizing Section 10.41.5 of the Zoning and Development By-law the area and percentage of residential floor area being excluded should be shown in the summary table.

For buildings existing as of October 27, 2026 that were approved under the previous storage exclusion regulations, provide detailed internal dimensioning showing the excluded storage area.

Floor Area Exclusion Regulations and Bulletins

All excludable areas are noted in relevant by-laws. Some areas are further clarified within publicly accessible Council-approved Design Guidelines and Director of Planning-approved Bulletins; these include:

- Bulk Storage and In-Suite Storage – Multiple Family Residential Developments Bulletin (applicable only to buildings existing as of October 27, 2026); and

- Floor Area Exclusions for Improved Building Performance (Thermal Insulation and Rain Screen) Bulletin.

If an area in question cannot be identified as excludable in a relevant by-law, it must be included in floor area.

By-law definitions (found in Section 2 of the Zoning and Development By-law) will take precedence over any other definition source. Terms that are not specifically defined in the relevant by-laws are administered on the basis of past practice, in accordance with the intent of the by-law.

4.4 Area Requirements

Compliance sheets may be required for all “regulated by area” by-law requirements which include, but are not limited to:

- FSR/floor area – total
- FSR/floor area – per use
- FSR/floor area – location by storey
- Site coverage – total
- Site coverage – impervious surface
- Site coverage – aggregate area
- Areas used to determine Parking, Loading, Bicycle, Passenger requirements – by use classification

FSR compliance plans must be verified and digitally signed and sealed by the Architect.

Additional information may be required to demonstrate compliance with separate sections of the Zoning and Development By-law and Parking By-law. Example: Floor Area Exclusions for Improved Building Performance (Thermal Insulation and Rain Screen) Bulletin.

Dimensioning used on the floor area compliance plan submissions must be identical to those on all plans submitted for approval. Detailed perimeter dimensioning is required.

Dimensioning used to demonstrate compliance at the Development Permit stage will be used to confirm the subsequent Building Permit application plans are identical. ***Inconsistencies can cause significant delays.***

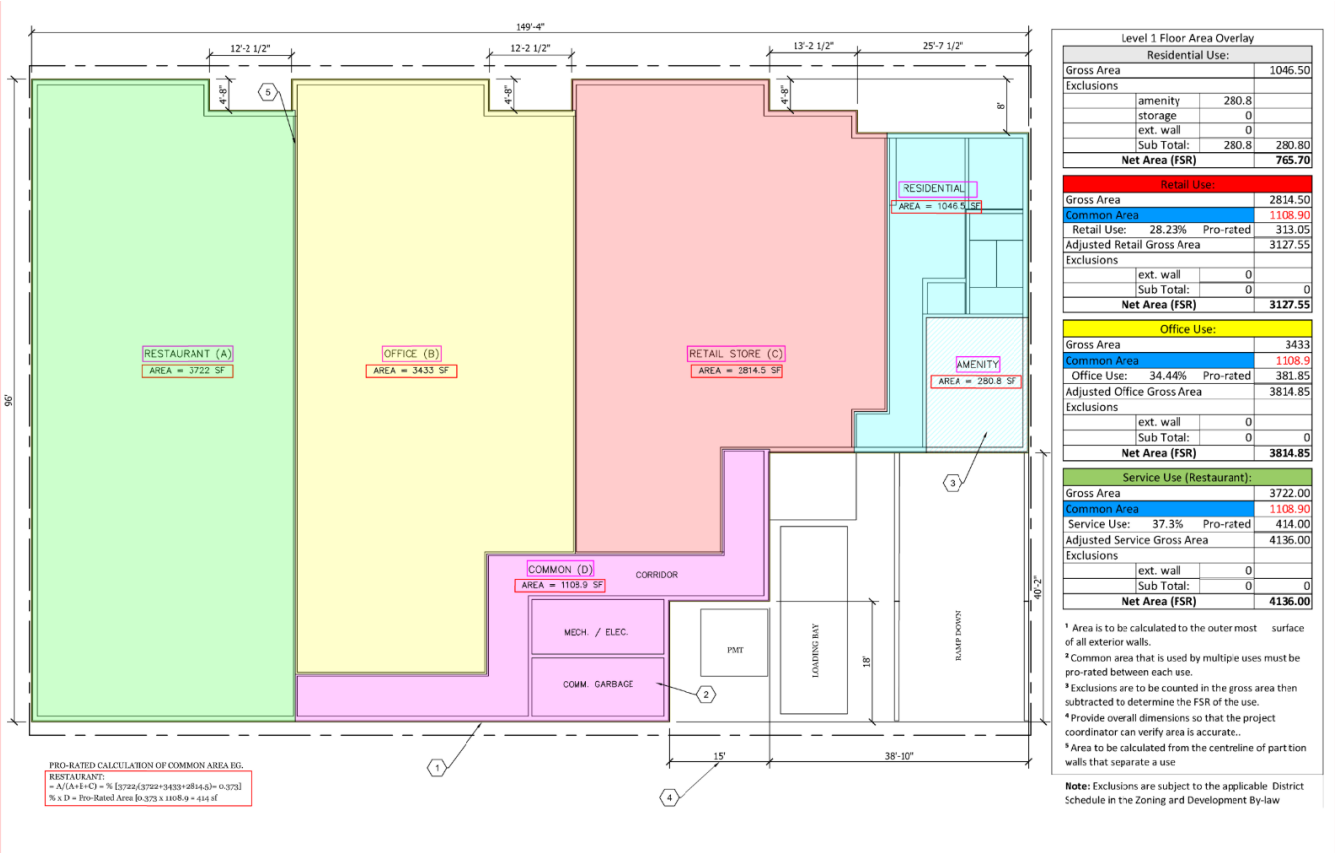
All “regulated by area” elements must be clearly dimensioned on the overlays and plans.

5 COMMENTS AND EXAMPLES

See below for acceptable area compliance plan examples demonstrating a single use floor area. All dimensions shown are reproduced on the architectural plans submitted for approval. (The examples have been photo reduced. Application submissions must be done in an acceptable scale.)

5.1 Example – Verifiable Area Calculations

Diagram 1: Floor Area Overlay – Used in Manually Verifiable Calculation



Level 1 Floor Area Overlay

Residential Use:			
Gross Area			1046.50
Exclusions			
	amenity	280.8	
	storage	0	
	ext. wall	0	
	Sub Total:	280.8	280.80
Net Area (FSR)			**765.70**

Retail Use:			
Gross Area			2814.50
Common Area			1108.90
Retail Use:	28.23%	Pro-rated	313.05
Adjusted Retail Gross Area			3127.55
Exclusions			
	ext. wall	0	
	Sub Total:	0	0
Net Area (FSR)			**3127.55**

Office Use:			
Gross Area			3433
Common Area			1108.9
Office Use:	34.44%	Pro-rated	381.85
Adjusted Office Gross Area			3814.85
Exclusions			
	ext. wall	0	
	Sub Total:	0	0
Net Area (FSR)			**3814.85**

Service Use (Restaurant):			
Gross Area			3722.00
Common Area			1108.90
Service Use:	37.3%	Pro-rated	414.00
Adjusted Service Gross Area			4136.00
Exclusions			
	ext. wall	0	
	Sub Total:	0	0
Net Area (FSR)			**4136.00**

[1] Area is to be calculated to the outer most surface of all exterior walls.
[2] Common area that is used by multiple uses must be pro-rated between each use.
[3] Exclusions are to be counted in the gross area then subtracted to determine the FSR of the use.
[4] Provide overall dimensions so that the project coordinator can verify area is accurate..
[5] Area to be calculated from the centreline of partition walls that separate a use

Note: Exclusions are subject to the applicable District Schedule in the Zoning ard Development By-law