

Policy

Seniors Housing Rezoning Policy

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1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Seniors are a fast-growing age demographic in Vancouver, with more older persons in the city than ever before. Many seniors live on fixed incomes and will need to consider changing health, accessibility and housing needs as they age. Some older adults will choose to stay in their existing home or community as long as they can, while others may seek out or require seniors' housing with supports or will downsize to a more manageable or accessible home.

The City of Vancouver's Seniors Housing Strategy (2024) aims to ensure older adults have the housing and supports needed to allow for aging in appropriate and affordable housing in their community. It also seeks to prioritize those who need it most by focusing on affordable housing options, such as seniors social, co-op and supportive housing, and subsidized assisted living and long-term care. This rezoning policy helps achieve these goals by enabling more housing options for older adults, with and without supports, in neighbourhoods across the city. It offers more flexibility for 100% non-profit and government-owned seniors housing buildings to encourage the development or redevelopment of these important uses. It also offers flexibility for privately-owned seniors housing that contribute significant public benefits.

The Seniors Housing Rezoning Policy also aligns with the Vancouver Plan (2022), which has a key goal to create Equitable Housing and Complete Neighbourhoods by allowing more housing options and opportunities for everyone to choose a livable neighbourhood that meets their needs. This policy follows the Vancouver Plan land-use framework, by enabling new seniors housing in Villages, Neighbourhood Centres and Rapid Transit Areas, near local shops, services, parks and transit.

2 INTENT

The intent of the Seniors Housing Rezoning Policy is to create more housing options, with and without care supports, near transit, green spaces and off busy streets for older adults to age in their community. This includes enabling private options with supports and opportunities for 100% non-profit and government-owned subsidized community care and assisted living, as well as social housing for seniors.

For this policy seniors housing refers to the following uses, which are defined within the Zoning & Development By-law and which are intended for older adults:

- **Community Care or Assisted Living Facility - Class B**
The use of premises operated as a licensed community care facility or registered assisted living facility in compliance with the Community Care and Assisted Living Act (British Columbia) to provide residential care to 7 or more persons not related by blood or marriage to the licensee or, if the licensee is a corporation, to any director, officer or member of the corporation.
- **Seniors Supportive or Independent Living Housing**
The use of a building for residential units designed to accommodate seniors as they age including

separate common areas for dining and socializing, and the provision of meals, housekeeping and personal care but does not include a community care or assisted living facility or group residence.

- **Social Housing (where occupancy is restricted to older adults 55+)**

Social Housing that meets the Zoning and Development By-law definition, and where there is a housing agreement or other security as required by the City restricting occupancy to residents aged 55 or older. Social housing must be owned and operated by a non-profit or government body at affordability levels specified in the by-law.

To encourage and enable more affordable types of seniors housing, additional heights and densities will be considered to create new seniors social housing, seniors supportive or independent living housing, and community care or assisted living facilities that are 100% owned by a non-profit corporation, or by or on behalf of the City, the Province of British Columbia, or Canada. Additional heights and densities will also be considered for privately-owned seniors housing that contribute significant public benefits.

This policy applies to all applications received on or after July 23rd, 2024. Rezoning applications will be considered when all of the following criteria are met.

3 ELIGIBLE SENIORS HOUSING TYPES

Projects must demonstrate that 100% of the residential or institutional floor space is one of, or a combination of, the following uses as defined by the Zoning and Development By-law:

- Community Care or Assisted Living Facility – Class B
- Seniors Supportive or Independent Living Housing
- Social Housing, where occupancy is restricted to those aged 55 or older.

Seniors Supportive or Independent Living Housing and Seniors Social Housing should be restricted to residents aged 55 years of age or older, whereas a Community Care or Assisted Living Facility should be intended for use by older adults but may also serve a broader age range with care needs.

4 LOCATION AND FORM OF DEVELOPMENT

Subject to urban design performance including consideration of shadow analysis, public view impacts, frontage length, building massing, and setbacks, and demonstration of a degree of community support, sites and densities that would be considered under this policy are outlined in Table 1.

Seniors social housing and 100% government or non-profit owned community care or assisted living facilities may be considered for additional heights and densities above those outlined in Table 1, as described in Section 4.1. Privately-owned seniors housing types that contribute significant additional public benefits may also be considered for additional heights and densities above those outlined in Table 1. It should also be noted that a six storey Community Care Facility may be taller in height than a typical six storey Seniors Supportive or Independent Living Housing, Assisted Living, or Seniors Social Housing building due to additional mechanical and electrical systems to meet operational needs.

Table 1: Location and Form of Development

Rezoning to Specific Height and Density¹				
Type	Location	Arterial Street	Local Street	Mixed-use, on Arterials Only
Community Care Facility	Vancouver Plan Villages, Neighbourhood Centres and Rapid Transit Areas (see yellow areas of Map A).	< = 6 storeys Up to 3.5 FSR	< = 6 storeys Up to 2.4 FSR or 2.7 FSR on corner sites	< = 6 storeys Up to 3.5 FSR or 3.7 FSR on corner sites
Seniors Supportive or Independent Living Housing or Assisted Living Facility	Vancouver Plan Villages, Neighbourhood Centres and Rapid Transit Areas (see yellow areas of Map A).	< = 6 storeys Up to 2.4 FSR or 2.7 FSR on corner sites	< = 6 storeys Up to 2.4 FSR or 2.7 FSR on corner sites	< = 6 storeys Up to 3.5 FSR
Seniors Social Housing	Vancouver Plan Villages, Neighbourhood Centres and Rapid Transit Areas (see yellow areas of Map A).	< = 6 storeys Up to 2.7 FSR or 3.0 FSR on corner sites	< = 6 storeys Up to 2.7 FSR or 3.0 on corner sites	< = 6 storeys Up to 3.5 FSR
All Seniors Housing and Community Care Uses within Community Plan Areas	Community Plan Areas and Major Project Sites (see blue areas of Map A).	Projects will be considered if they align with the heights and densities as set per the applicable community plan or major project site policy, or if the site overlaps with a Transit-Oriented Area as per Appendix: Map B. For sites within a Community Plan that overlap with a Transit-Oriented Area, the heights and densities will be considered as specified in the rows above.		

The Rezoning Site should not leave any remaining R1-1 or RT lot(s) with a total continuous frontage of less than 50 feet (15.2 meters) or obstruct access to a lane for any remaining lot(s).

¹ Additional height and density may be considered for some projects as described in section 4.1. If a project includes more than one allowable type of development, the project may go up to the higher of the two allowable FSRs.

4.1 Additional Height and Density Considerations beyond Table 1

Additional height and density will be considered for seniors housing types that are 100% owned by a non-profit corporation, or by or on behalf of the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia, or Canada, and for privately-owned seniors housing types that contribute significant additional public benefits.

In Vancouver Plan areas (see yellow areas of Appendix: Map A) additional height and density will be determined based on heritage considerations, site context, urban design performance, and a detailed proposal review.

In community plan areas (see blue areas of Appendix: Map A), these projects will be considered for additional height and density where policies already enable redevelopment to apartment forms or where it falls within Transit-Oriented Areas, as identified in Appendix: Map B. Heights and densities to be determined based on heritage considerations, site context, urban design performance, and a detailed proposal review.

Qualifying projects for additional height and density may be mixed-use (e.g., include a commercial component), but all of the residential units proposed in the development must be rental in tenure or fall within the definition of a community care or assisted living facility.

Applicants should also review the Transit-Oriented Areas Rezoning Policy, which guides rezoning applications within lands identified in the Transit-Oriented Areas By-law, as per Bill 47 'Housing Statutes (Transit-Oriented Areas) Amendment Act, 2023' from the Province of British Columbia (BC) as there may be additional applicable enabling policies.

4.2 Rezoning Eligible Areas

This policy applies to areas of the city that currently allow residential, including:

- (a) Vancouver Plan identified Villages, Neighbourhood Centres and Rapid Transit Areas, as shown in Map A; and
- (b) Community Plan Areas and Major Project Sites, as shown in Map A.

In addition, this policy applies to:

- (a) Any block that is partially included within a Vancouver Plan area identified in Map A; and
- (b) Any site outside of the area identified in Map A that has an existing Community Care or Assisted Living Facility – Class B, Seniors Supportive or Independent Living Housing, or Social Housing

apartment building. These sites would be considered for the same heights and densities as allowable in the yellow area of Map A.

4.3 Mixed-use Residential Building Policies

Mixed-use will generally be required for sites that:

- (a) are immediately adjacent to a property that has existing zoning for commercial use (e.g., C-1, C-2, RR-3A, RR-3B, or CD-1 with retail at grade), or
- (b) include a corner lot at an intersection where two or more of the other corner sites are zoned for commercial use.

4.4 Design Guidelines

Rezoning applications should respond to the following guidelines, as appropriate, based on seniors housing type being proposed.

- (a) Seniors Housing, Community Care Facility and Group Residence Guidelines: Part A Community Care and Group Residences, or
- (b) Seniors Housing, Community Care Facility and Group Residence Guidelines: Part B Seniors Supportive or Independent Living Housing and Assisted Living.

5 TENANT RELOCATION AND RESIDENT RELOCATION POLICIES

The Seniors Housing Rezoning Policy supports protections of existing residents and tenants living in varying types of seniors housing.

All rezoning applications considered under this policy must meet the Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy or the Resident Relocation Policy for Community Care and Assisted Living Residences, depending on applicability. Generally:

- (a) The Resident Relocation Policy for Community Care and Assisted Living Residences applies to existing community care facilities and assisted living residences; and
- (b) The Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy applies to existing social housing and seniors supportive or independent housing that is rental in tenure.

6 COMMUNITY AMENITY CONTRIBUTIONS (CACs)

Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) policies apply to privately initiated rezoning applications. CAC requirements vary by seniors housing type as outlined the Community Amenity Contributions for Rezoning Policy.

Privately-owned seniors housing types seeking additional heights and density under Section 4.1 will be required to contribute significant additional benefits.

7 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROJECT PROPONENTS

The below additional requirements should be considered in rezoning proposals.

7.1 Security of Tenure and Operational Requirements

Legal agreements (e.g., Housing Agreement pursuant to section 565.2 of the Vancouver Charter, including no stratification and no separate sales covenants) or any legal mechanisms deemed necessary by the Direction of Legal Services and the Director of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability will be used for a term of 60 years or the life of the building, whichever is greater.

This includes:

- (a) For Seniors Supportive or Independent Living Housing, a Housing Agreement or other legal mechanism to restrict occupancy to those aged 55 years of age or older and to secure the units as rental housing (e.g. no stratification and no separate sales covenants), if the project is rental tenure.
- (b) For Seniors Social Housing, a Housing Agreement or other legal agreement to restrict occupancy to those aged 55 years of age or older and to secure the use as social housing.

7.2 Housing for Families and Unit Mix

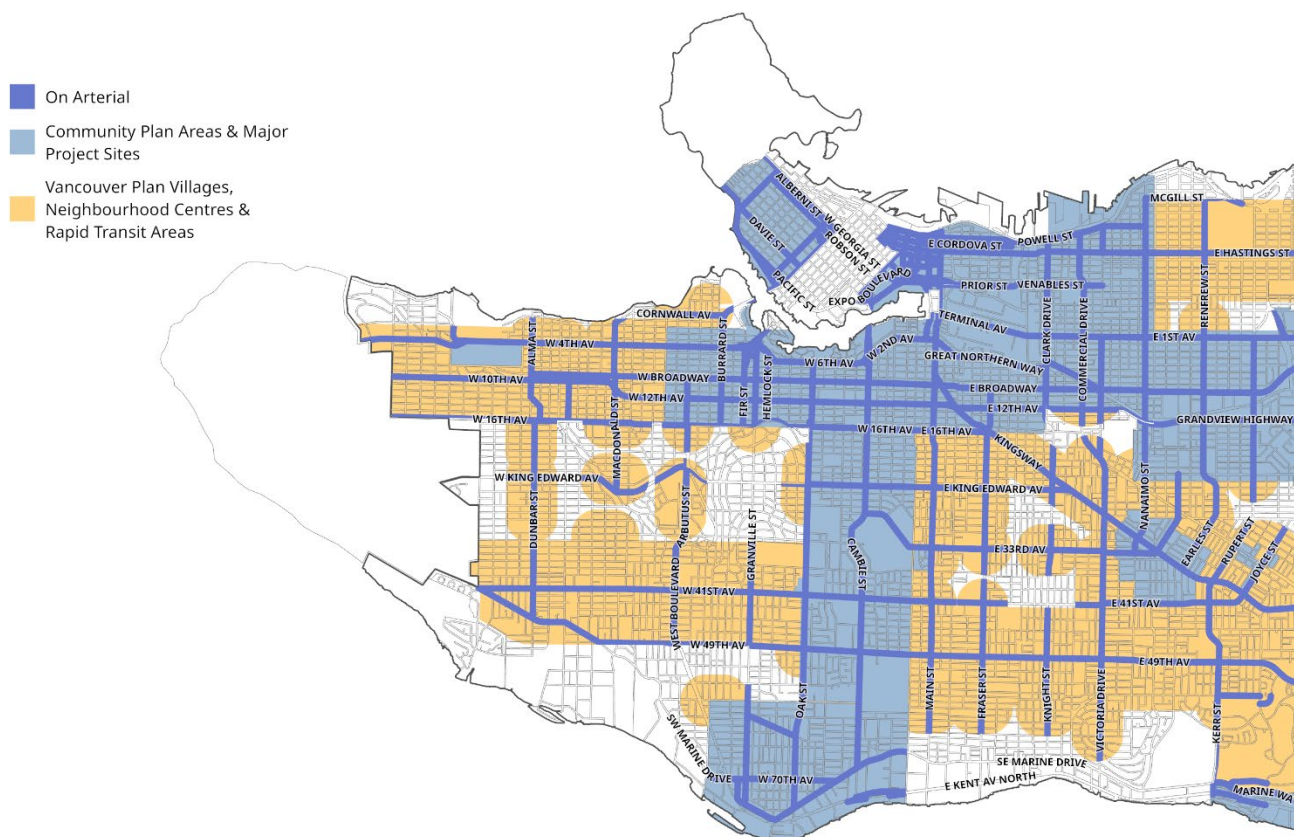
The City's Family Room: Housing Mix Policy for Rezoning Projects will not apply to development applications coming through this policy as the purpose of the policy is to support older adults.

7.3 Green Buildings

The Seniors Housing Rezoning Policy supports green building objectives and the development of near-zero emission buildings. All rezoning applications considered under this policy will be expected to meet the Green Buildings Policy for Rezonings.

APPENDIX: REZONING POLICY MAPS

Map A: Locations of sites that can be considered within the Seniors Housing Rezoning Policy



Map B: Locations of sites that can be considered within the Seniors Housing Rezoning Policy with Transit-Oriented Areas

