



Sidney

# A Guide to Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing

## Background

In 2023, the Province introduced new housing legislation, Bill 44, requiring local governments to allow Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) on all lots zoned for single family or two-family (duplex) dwellings uses, depending on lot size and location.

## What is Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH)?

Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing is a type of infill housing, often referred to as the “missing middle”, that allows for multiple dwelling units in a variety of housing forms at a similar scale to existing “single-family” neighbourhoods. Examples of small-scale multi-unit housing can include, but are not limited to a single-family dwelling, secondary suites, duplexes, townhouses, triplexes, fourplexes, and garden suites.

## Different combinations of housing forms

One to four dwelling units can be designed in a variety of different ways. The links below provide a few examples for how dwelling units might be configured on a lot:

- The Province has released a [catalogue of standardized housing designs](#).
- The Federal government has released a [catalogue of standardized housing designs](#).
- Small Housing BC includes sample home designs on their [website](#) to showcase the potential for different housing configurations.
- There are several local governments in BC that provide ready-to-use designs within their jurisdiction. (e.g. Kelowna, Quesnel, Regional District of North Okanagan, etc.) Check their websites for more information.



Some of these designs can be directly applied to properties in Sidney. Others may require some adaptations to work in the community.

## How has Sidney’s Zoning Bylaw changed?

Sidney’s Zoning Bylaw was updated in late June 2024 as required by provincial legislation to allow for small scale multi-unit housing on all lots that were previously restricted to single family or two-family (duplex) dwellings, depending on lot size and location. Categories like “single-family dwelling”, “two-family dwelling”, “detached secondary dwelling”, and “secondary suite” have been removed from the bylaw and replaced with a more general term of “dwelling unit”. Property owners are now able to build up to 3 or 4 units on their property in a variety of configurations to suit their needs all under the “dwelling unit” use. Building heights, setbacks, and other building regulations have changed to allow for flexibility to build up to the maximum number of dwelling units.

These changes do not require properties to have up to three or four units. It is each property owner’s choice to determine if they would like to redevelop their property or add more dwelling units to it.

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## How to get started

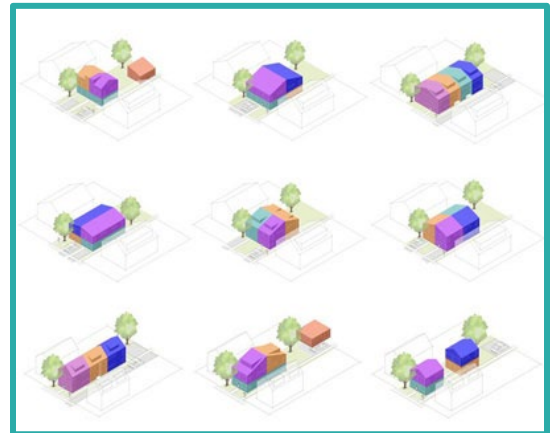
### 1. Identify if a lot is eligible for SSMUH

Small-scale multi-unit housing applies to properties currently in the “Neighbourhood Residential” zoning group (which includes zones R1, R1-ESA, R2, R2-ESA, and R3) as well as properties with lot areas less than 750m<sup>2</sup> currently in the ‘Multi-Unit Residential’ zoning group (which includes zones RM5, RM6, RM7, RM7-WS). It does not apply to properties zoned R4. Check the [Zoning Map](#) or use the online tool, [SidneyMap](#), to search for your property address to see if it is in one of the above zones that allow for small scale multi-unit housing. You can also contact the Development Services Department to confirm.

### 2. Determine how many units are permitted on a property

A lot’s size, shape, and location will impact the number and size of dwelling units that can be accommodated on a property. However, since July 1, 2024, all properties that were previously restricted to single-family dwellings and duplexes in Sidney are zoned to allow up to 3 or 4 dwelling units depending on lot size:

- Three units are permitted on lots that are 280 m<sup>2</sup> or smaller, and
- Four units are permitted on lots that are greater than 280 m<sup>2</sup>.



You can check the size of properties in Sidney by using the online tool [SidneyMap](#), or by contacting staff in the Development Services Department.

### 3. Gather property information

The Town may have records on file such as a site survey and building permit drawings. You may have your Property Title from when you purchased your parcel. If not, you are able to request a copy from the Land Title and Survey Authority of BC to ensure there are no charges on title that would restrict what can be constructed on the lot or prevent the addition of dwelling units. There could also be easements and/or statutory rights-of-way on title that limit where buildings could be located.

### 4. Review applicable bylaws and regulations, including but not limited to:

- [Zoning Bylaw](#)
- [BC Building Code](#)
- [Building Regulations Bylaw](#)
- [Off-Street Parking and Loading Bylaw](#)
- [Subdivision and Development Bylaw](#)
- [Tree Preservation Bylaw](#)
- [Official Community Plan](#)
- [Service Connection Fees & Charges Bylaw](#)
- [Interim Flood Construction Level Policy](#)
- [Strata Conversion Policy](#)
- [Development Cost Charge Bylaw](#)
- [CRD Saanich Peninsula Water and Wastewater DCC Bylaw](#)

#### a. Zoning Bylaw Requirements

Specific use regulations for zones eligible for small-scale multi-unit housing can be found in section 4.2 of the Zoning Bylaw, and spatial regulations can be found in section 5.2. There are also general regulations and landscaping regulations that apply to all properties in sections 4.1, 5.1, and 6 of the Zoning Bylaw.

Note: The Town’s Zoning Bylaw does not regulate distances between multiple buildings on the property – please refer to the BC Building Code.



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## b. Parking Requirements

In general, the bylaw requires one parking space per dwelling unit. Parking in Sidney is regulated by the Town's [Off-Street Parking and Loading Bylaw](#), not by the Zoning Bylaw. While the Town's Zoning Bylaw was updated in June 2024 to allow for small-scale multi-unit housing, the Town's Off-Street Parking Bylaw has not yet been updated to reflect this change. In the interim, small-scale multi-unit housing will generally continue to follow requirements in the Off-Street Parking and Loading Bylaw that pertain to single-family, two-family, and secondary suite dwellings, and Neighbourhood Residential and Intensive Neighbourhood Residential areas.

Note: Driveway widths should be reduced on boulevard crossings when feasible, to help leave space for street parking. Private access walkways should not be extended past the property line into the boulevard when located adjacent to the driveway.

### 5. Check site servicing and potential off-site works that may be required

Depending on what is being proposed, new servicing connections (water, sewer, storm drain, etc.) may be required to support the number and size of dwelling units proposed for the parcel. The Building Regulations Bylaw requires a site servicing plan, prepared by a Registered Civil Engineering Professional, to be submitted with a building permit application when three or more dwelling units are involved. Similarly, off-site works and improvements to the boulevard adjacent to your property may be required when three or more dwelling units are involved. Off-site improvements required beyond the property line may be eligible for a latecomer agreement. Please contact the Engineering Department for more information.

Note: Electrical connections for new developments, including new dwelling units, are required to be installed underground. You will need to coordinate with BC Hydro to have an underground service connection designed and installed, and there will be a fee payable to BC Hydro.

### 6. Determine if Development Cost Charges (DCCs) apply

Municipalities may levy development cost charges (DCCs) on new developments of 4 units or more to assist with the capital costs of installing new infrastructure. This may include new sewer, water, drainage, parks, or road infrastructure that is necessary to service the new development. The [Development Cost Charge Bylaw](#) establishes the areas where DCCs would apply to new developments, which must be paid prior to the issuance of a building permit. The current bylaw is [under review](#), and a new DCC bylaw will likely include increased rates and greater areas of the Town in which DCCs would apply for new development. Additionally, separate water and wastewater DCCs will be collected for the CRD, whose bylaw is also under review. Please contact the Engineering Department for more information.

### 7. Determine what permits are required

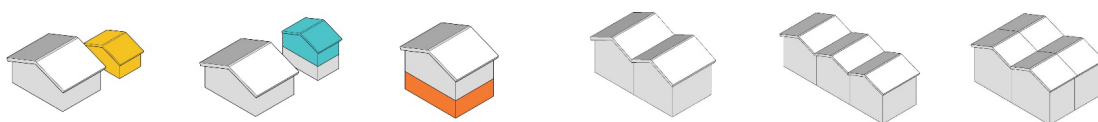
There are several permits and documentation requirements to build new housing units on a parcel:

#### Building Permits:

Adding any number of dwelling units to a property, including a secondary suite, requires a Building Permit. BC Building Code requirements for adding a secondary suite are different than for adding another dwelling unit. More information on Building Permits can be found on the Town's website [here](#). Please contact the Development Services Department for more information.

#### Development Permits:

Some properties are located within Development Permit Areas (DPAs), which have guidelines for form and character and for environmentally sensitive areas. For properties within a Development Permit Area, an approved Development Permit may be required before a Building Permit can be issued. Please review the consolidated [DPA Map](#) and check the [Official Community Plan](#) to determine if a property is located within a DPA and which design guidelines apply.



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## Tree Permits:

The [Tree Preservation Bylaw](#) protects many trees in Sidney by size, species, and location, and all trees located within the municipal boulevard are protected. Tree retention is strongly encouraged, however, a tree removal or pruning permit may be required. Please contact the Engineering Department to find out if trees on your property are protected as this could impact the overall site design. If there are protected trees, a report prepared by a Certified Consulting Arborist may be required to assess the trees and the impact of the proposed development on the trees.

## 8. Request a pre-application meeting & submit an application

It is advisable to contact the Town prior to preparing an application. Staff can verify your understanding of what can be built on your property and the required permit applications, fees, documentation, and application requirements. After gathering information, reviewing bylaws, meeting with the Town, and hiring the appropriate professionals, your application can be prepared and submitted.

## 9. Fees and Deposits

Municipal fees and deposits involved depend on the type of application and what is being proposed. These include but are not limited to application fees (e.g. [building](#), [development](#), [trees](#)), deposits (e.g. landscaping deposit, tree deposit, damage deposits), [servicing connections](#), [development cost charges](#), [amenity cost charges](#). Other costs to consider are off-site improvements and servicing upgrades.

## Additional Considerations

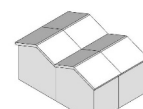
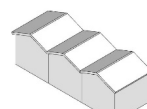
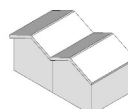
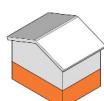
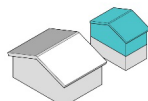
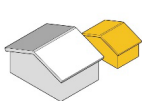
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If the lot is eligible for SSMUH under Sidney's Zoning Bylaw, there may be other regulations or factors to consider:

- Trees on the property, boulevard, and neighbouring properties
- Required unobstructed tree planting area
- Design guidelines, if the property is located within a Development Permit Area
- Contaminated soil/ site disclosure statement (see Provincial [Environmental Management Act and Contaminated Sites Regulation](#))
- [Archaeological potential](#)
- [Riparian Areas Protection Regulation](#)
- Proximity to a highway
- Proximity to the ocean or a watercourse
- Flood construction level
- On-site storm water management
- Undergrounding power and communication services
- Fire protection conditions and proximity to a fire hydrant
- Site servicing and third-party utility connections
- [BC Hydro electrical connection requests](#)
- [Technical Safety BC Permits](#)
- Off-site works and improvements
- Record drawings of new services installed
- Strata-titling or strata conversion of new and/or existing buildings
- Tenure (rental/ strata)
- Business licence if renting more than two dwelling units on the property
- [Latecomer agreements](#)
- Private covenants/easements
- Existing municipal right of ways for sanitary sewer, storm drain, water mains and others, including third party and private easements

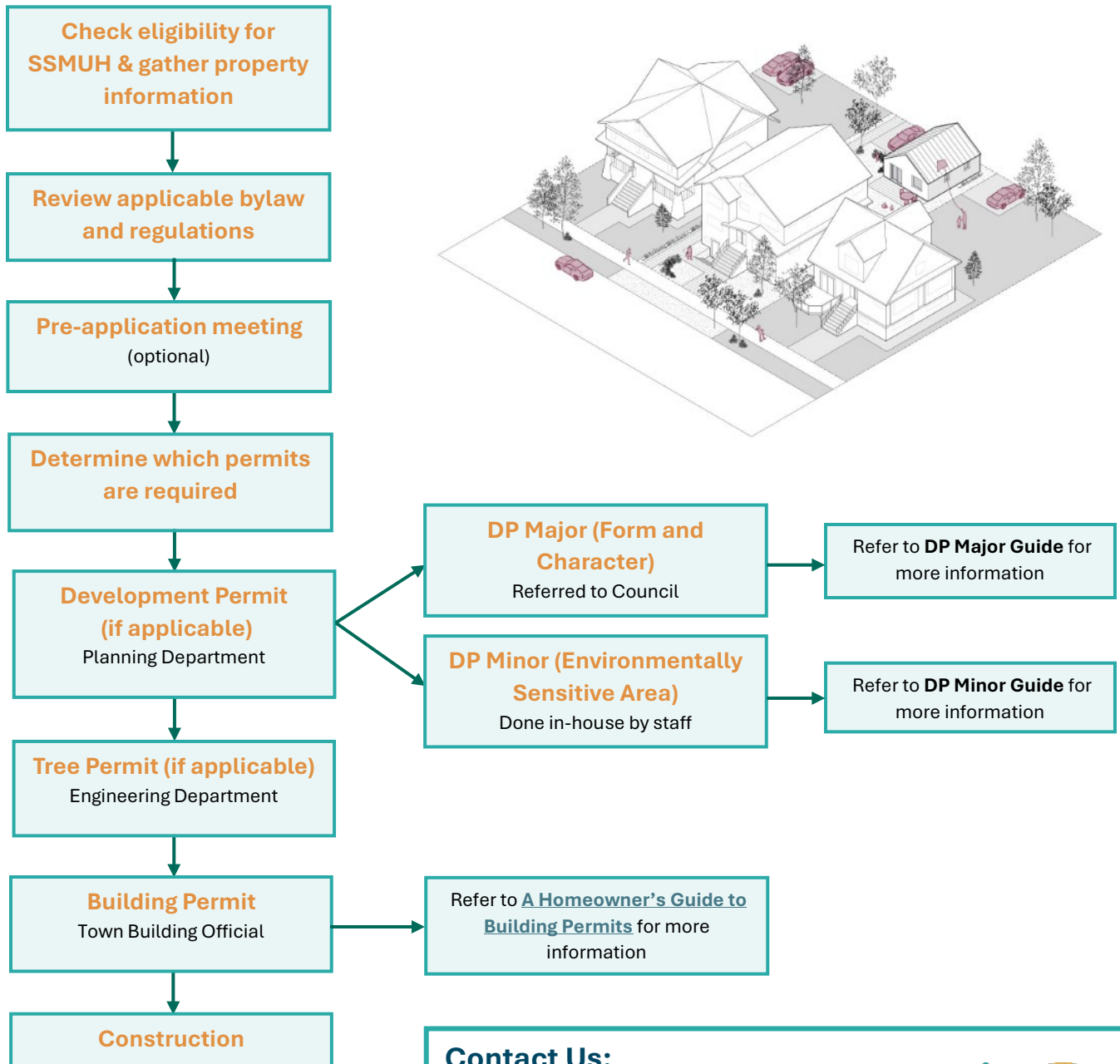
## Resources:

- BC Housing [Secondary Suite Incentive Program](#): information on financial grants available for the creation of secondary suites in existing homes.
- Province of BC [Home Suite Home](#): A guide to secondary suites in BC



# A Guide to Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing

## Getting Started:



## Contact Us:

### Development Services Department

By Email: [developmentsservices@sidney.ca](mailto:developmentsservices@sidney.ca)

By Phone: 250-656-1725

### Engineering Department

By Email: [engineeringservices@sidney.ca](mailto:engineeringservices@sidney.ca)

By Phone: 250-655-4502

In Person: 2440 Sidney Ave, Sidney BC V8L 1Y7

(Monday to Friday 8:30 am – 4:00 pm excluding statutory holidays)

[www.sidney.ca](http://www.sidney.ca)

