

Planning & Development Services Advisory

Multi-Family Residential Developments

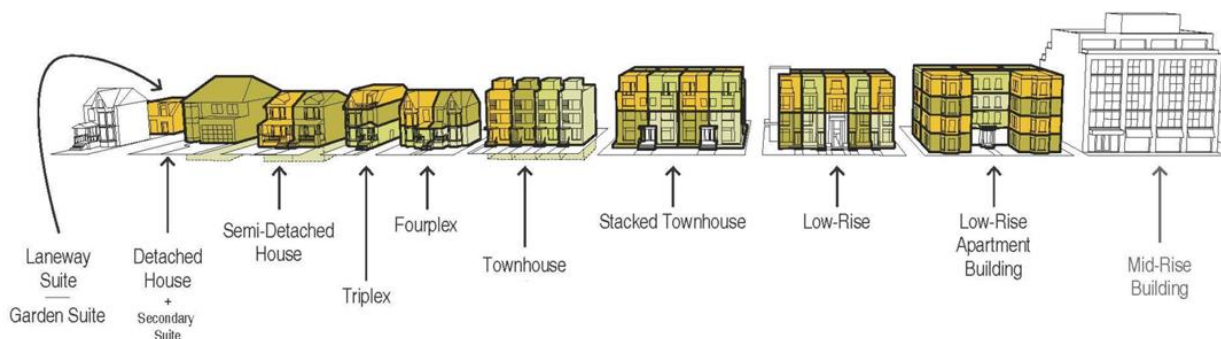
On January 31, 2024, Regina City Council approved the first set of amendments to The Regina Zoning Bylaw, 2019, to support the implementation of the Housing Accelerator Funding (HAF) planning initiatives and advance the direction of Council. These amendments include permitting up to four units to be built on low-density residential lots within the City’s intensification boundary and allowing up to two units on low-density residential lots outside the City’s intensification boundary.

We understand that these zoning changes have sparked significant interest among residents. It’s important for potential developers to engage consultants early to navigate the Building Code requirements, which differ significantly from those for 1–2-unit developments. Comprehensive design and planning prior to application or meetings with the City are more important than ever.

This guide aims to help you understand the key considerations and steps involved in multi-family residential development, ensuring your project is feasible and compliant.

Definitions

Understanding the terminology used in multi-family residential development is crucial for ensuring compliance with zoning bylaws and building codes. Here are some key definitions that will help you navigate the requirements and regulations:



Multi-Family Residential – means a building containing more than one or two dwelling units but does not include semi-detached dwellings (with or without secondary suites), duplexes (two units but neither are a secondary suite), single family dwellings (with or without secondary suites) or backyard suites. This would include all other ground-oriented residential housing or apartment style housing. All dwelling units in multi-family residential dwellings may or may not constitute a single real estate entity.

Self-Contained Dwelling Unit - means a unit having its own kitchen, bathroom, lavatory, and entrance, not shared by other units with appropriate entry and separation requirements, if applicable, from other units, as outlined in the Building Code.

Principal Dwelling - means the primary dwelling unit operated as a self-contained living unit, used or intended to be used by one or more persons that contains cooking, eating, living, sleeping and sanitary facilities that meets the required zoning of the site.

Secondary Suite - a self-contained dwelling unit with a prescribed floor area located in a building or portion of a building of only residential occupancy that contains only one other dwelling unit and common spaces, and where both dwelling units constitute a single real estate entity.

Backyard Suite - a self-contained dwelling unit with a prescribed floor area located in or proposed as an accessory/ancillary building to the primary dwelling(s) on the site, where all dwelling units constitute a single real estate entity. These are sometimes also referred to as laneway or garden suites.

Planned Group Development - means a grouping of two or more principal buildings that contain single, or multiple residential dwelling unit(s) on one parcel of land that may or may not constitute a single real estate entity but are not accessory dwellings (buildings labelled as accessory are owned or titled to one person) and does not include secondary suites.

Multi-Family Residential Development Considerations:

When considering a multi-unit development, there are several important factors to keep in mind:

Unit Configurations:

It's not just about the number of units or suites; it's also about their configurations. Are you planning separate primary units, a secondary suite, or backyard/garden suite? Each configuration has distinct requirements and implications.

Regulatory Compliance:

While the zoning regulations may permit the construction of up to four units on a lot, it is essential to comply with all other relevant zoning, building code, and servicing requirements. These regulations can be intricate and must be carefully adhered to. Each lot is unique, and different regulations may apply based on the specific configuration of your site. Zoning, building and servicing requirements are further detailed below.

Professional Guidance and the Role of the City:

Consulting with competent designers and engineers is crucial to navigate the complexities of zoning, building codes, and servicing requirements. The City acts as the regulator and cannot serve as the designer. While we can provide information and support, you will need to engage with professional designers and consultants to ensure your project meets all necessary requirements.

Sample Project Progression:

Here is a suggested progression for how a multi-family residential development project might unfold:

1. **Define Your Project Scope:**
 - Clearly outline the number of units and the design of your project.
 - Determine if your project involves a secondary suite, backyard suite, or additional units in or outside a primary dwelling.
2. **Complete Zoning and Building Code Analysis:**
 - Engage a professional designer and have them complete a Zoning Bylaw and Building code analysis to assess the feasibility of your project and ensure compliance with building codes (configuration, number of units, and setbacks will determine things like openings, type of construction, fire separations, etc).
3. **Assess Servicing Requirements:**
 - Evaluate the servicing needs for your site, including water, sewer, and other utilities.
4. **Evaluate Incentive Programs:**
 - You may be eligible to take advantage of a provincial or municipal incentive program to help with the cost of your build or provide a tax exemption.
5. **Meet with City Officials:**
 - After a designer has confirmed the feasibility of your project, this is the opportunity to have a pre-application meeting with City officials to address specific zoning, building code and site servicing requirements.
6. **Proceed with Building Design Work:**
 - Complete remainder of design and construction drawings.
 - Apply for a building permit.

Considerations Checklists:

The following are specific items that should be considered before investing in a property or proceeding to an application.

City Planning and Zoning Considerations

- Type of Dwelling:**
 - Are you planning to build separate principal dwellings, or one principal dwelling with a secondary suite or a backyard suite?
- Zoning:**
 - What is the zoning classification of the lot?
- Intensification Area:**
 - Is the property located inside or outside the intensification boundary?
 - Is the property located within the primary or secondary intensification area?
- Overlay Zones:**
 - Is the property within a special overlay zone?
- Lot Size:**
 - What is the size of the lot?
- Heritage Designation:**
 - Does the property have any heritage designation that might affect development?
- Environmental Considerations:**
 - Are there any environmental constraints or considerations, such as floodways or protected areas?

- **Access and Egress:**
 - Are there any specific access or egress requirements for the property?
- **Building Setbacks:**
 - What are the required building setbacks for the property?
- **Building Heights:**
 - What are the maximum allowable building heights?
- **Lot Coverage:**
 - What is the maximum lot coverage allowed for buildings and structures?
- **Landscaping Requirements:**
 - Are there any specific landscaping requirements or guidelines?

The [Regina Zoning Bylaw](#) and the [zoning map available on Regina.ca](#) can be valuable resources. Depending on your project, you may need to apply for a lot separation (subdivision), a lot combination (parcel tie or consolidation), discretionary use, or other City Planning approvals. For more detailed information, please visit the [Planning page on Regina.ca](#).

Servicing Considerations

- **Consultation with an Engineer:**
 - Consult with a qualified engineer to assess servicing requirements.
- **Sewer and Water Connections:**
 - Will the existing services be sufficient for the proposed development, or will new services be required?
 - If a new service is required, how and where will it connect to the city sewer and water mains?
- **Service Splitting:**
 - How will the services be split for the various units on the site? Internal to the building or external? Lockable shutoffs or curb stops on the water service are required for each individual unit if metered separately.
 - Consider how you will meter water and electricity usage for each unit.
- **Fire Flow Protection**
 - Fire Underwriters' Survey Required Fire Flow calculations will be required at the time of development permit to ensure that the City's main has sufficient fire flow to protect the proposed development
- **Stormwater Management:**
 - Consider the management of stormwater runoff to prevent flooding and ensure proper drainage.
- **Garbage/Recycling/Compost Collection:**
 - Consider where bins will be stored, and how the service will be provided for multiple units.
- **Other Services:**
 - Consider electrical services through SaskPower, communications services through SaskTel, and natural gas service through SaskEnergy, as these are not managed by the City.

Servicing must conform with the City of Regina [Design Standards](#) and [Standard Construction Specifications](#).

Building Considerations

- **Consultation with a Professional Designer:**
 - Consultation with a competent/professional designer is required.
- **Proposal and Design Configuration:**
 - Different code articles and requirements will apply based on the specific proposal and design configurations. Changes to a building to accommodate additional units (other than secondary suites) can require extensive and costly renovations.
- **Secondary Suites:**
 - Secondary suites are only permitted in buildings that contain **only one other dwelling unit**. They are not permitted in existing duplexes, triplexes, or backyard suites.
- **Backyard Suites:**
 - If backyard suites are intended to be constructed as an accessory dwelling to more than one primary dwelling (more than 2 total units on the site) then additional building code requirements may apply (see the backyard suite [advisory](#)).
- **Exiting, Spatial Separations, and Design of Storage Garages:**
 - Exiting, spatial separations (including fire separations), and the design of storage garages (if applicable) will be the biggest hurdles. Competent designers must provide solutions depending on the specific number of units and proposed design configuration.

Construction standards for multi-unit residential development have been undergoing an usually higher rate of change to promote housing goals. Due to the complex nature of requirements and cost of construction, it is important to speak with an experienced designer to weigh the options for your particular site and to meet your project goals. For additional building standards information, visit us at regina.ca/build.

Incentive Considerations

You may be eligible for various tax relief and incentive grants available at both the provincial and municipal levels.

- **Type of Units:**
 - Decide whether you are developing a secondary suite or separate principal units as it may affect the incentive program you may be eligible for. For example, the Secondary Suite Incentive, available from the province, cannot be used for additional principal units.
- **Intensification Area:**
 - Determine if your property is in the primary or secondary intensification area.
- **Neighbourhood:**
 - Check if your property is in the City Centre, Heritage, or North Central neighbourhood.
- **Heritage Property:**
 - Verify if your property has a heritage designation, as this may affect eligibility for certain incentives.

Visit the [Provincial website](#), or [Regina.ca/revitalize/](https://regina.ca/revitalize/) for more information on incentive programs.

Pre-Application Meetings:

[Pre-application meetings](#) offer designers, project managers, and building owners the chance to discuss upcoming projects with the City. Discussion topics may include interpretation of codes or bylaws, clarification of processes, questions about servicing, or other topics related to application preparation.

These meetings aim to provide answers to any outstanding questions from the applicant and ultimately enhance the quality of pending applications.

Given their novelty, all applicants for multi-family developments must initiate a pre-application meeting to proactively address any issues.

You will be asked to provide comprehensive drawings, including site plans, elevations/floor plans, code analysis, servicing plans, and construction assembly details. Typically, we expect drawings to be at the 40-60% detail stage. These should be more than rough sketches; quality drawings help us better understand setbacks and building code implications.

Complete the [meeting application form](#), once you are able to provide comprehensive drawings, (Which may include site plans, elevations/floor plans, code analysis, servicing plans, and construction assembly details).

Applications:

If you have completed the pre-application meeting with the City, you may be ready to proceed with your application. Please complete and submit the [appropriate application package through eBuild](#).

For more information on Building Permits, Incentive Programs or Zoning Information, please visit Regina.ca or contact [Service Regina](#).