

# GLOSSARY OF PLANNING TERMS

## Affordable Housing

Housing provided by the government, a non-profit or a private partner that can exist along the full housing continuum (ownership, private rental and social housing). Typically less expensive than market rates, affordability is dependent upon various factors, such as land cost, construction cost and available funding.

## Community Amenity Contribution (CAC)

A voluntary in-kind or cash contribution provided by a developer when additional development rights are granted through the rezoning process (see “Rezoning”). CACs help address the increased demands new residents and/or employees can have on city facilities. CACs are used to fund community centres, libraries, parks, and other community spaces.

## Comprehensive Development (CD-1) District

A custom-made zoning district created for a specific site. A CD-1 District is established through a rezoning process that considers City policies for the area, feedback from advisory committees and the community, and public benefits.

## Conditional Zoning

This describes the maximum development potential under existing zoning, if certain conditions are met. These conditions can include certain design features or public benefits. For example, higher densities in some areas may be permitted if social housing is provided on the site.

## Community Plan

A document containing policies that lay out the long-term vision for a community. It is developed with public input, and can address topics such as: the location of new housing; public spaces; community amenities; transportation; and more. A community plan is adopted by City Council as a set of policies that informs future development.

## Density

The amount of floor area (square metres or feet) of a site relative to the size of the site. It is often described as a ratio (see “Floor Space Ratio”). Density can be used as a rough measure of how large a building is.

## Density Bonus

A density bonus allows the construction of a larger building in exchange for provision of specific public benefits by the developer. It is a tool available in some zoning districts to help the City achieve community priorities.

## Development Cost Levy (DCL)

A fee collected on all new construction to meet the needs of our growing city. DCLs fund parks, childcare facilities, social housing and engineering infrastructure.

## Development Permit

A permit granted for a development proposal after it is reviewed by the City to ensure it meets the zoning regulations for the site. These regulations are contained in the district schedule (see “District Schedule”) and address land use, density and height. After the Development Permit is granted, a Building Permit has to be issued before construction can start. Even if no construction is proposed, a development permit may still be required to change a use in an existing building (e.g. from retail to office).

## District Schedule

A section of the Zoning and Development By-law that summarizes the zoning for a particular area, including the height, density, and uses permitted. For example, the C-5 District Schedule states what is permitted on the commercial streets of the West End (see “Zoning”).

## Flood Construction Level

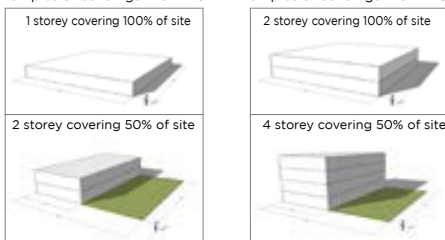
The minimum elevation of a floor being used for living space, business or the storage of goods that may be damaged by flood water. This helps mitigate the impacts of flooding.

## Floor Space Ratio (FSR)

A measurement of a building’s total floor area relative to the area of the site on which it is located. For example, on a 4,000 sq. ft. site with a maximum FSR of 0.7, the maximum home that would be allowed is 2,800 sq. ft. (4,000 sq. ft. x 0.7 FSR).

*Gross FSR* refers to the floor area before exclusions, while *net FSR* refers to the floor area after exclusions are removed (see “Floor Area Exclusions”).

Examples of buildings with 1 FSR      Examples of buildings with 2 FSR



## Floor Area Exclusions

Many district schedules allow for the exclusion of specific building features from floor area calculations. Spaces such as porches, balconies and small storage rooms are typically not counted in a building’s net floor area (see “Floor Space Ratio”).

## Form of Development

The physical design of a building, including the height, massing and architectural features (see “Height” and “Massing”). For example, the City has form of development guidelines to ensure new buildings provide a pleasant street experience and reduce shadowing on public spaces.

## Frontage

The width of a building along the street. The *retail frontage* refers to the width of a single storefront within a larger building.

## Grade

The elevation of the surface of the ground at any point on a site.

## Guidelines

Council-adopted directions and advice that inform development. They are meant to provide general guidance, as opposed to acting as legal requirements for development (see “Zoning”).

## Height

There are different technical methods for measuring the height of a building. For example, the height for towers is generally measured to the top of a parapet wall and does not include rooftop mechanical equipment that cannot be seen from the ground. Speak to a planner for more detail about how height is measured for a particular project.

## Hierarchy of Modes

The Transportation 2040 plan outlines how different forms of transportation are prioritized in the city. Walking is the highest priority, followed by cycling, transit, taxis and shared vehicles, and then the private car (see “Mode of Transportation”). This approach ensures that the city’s infrastructure helps everybody get to where they need to go.

## High-Capacity Transit

Any form of transit that carries more people than a local bus service and typically provides faster, more frequent service with fewer stops. The SkyTrain is a form of high-capacity transit.

## Inclusionary Zoning

When zoning or zoning policy requires that a portion of residential units in new development be made available for affordable housing.

## Infill

A residential building added to a lot that already contains an existing building. Unlike a laneway house, infill units may be stratified and sold separately.

## Laneway House

A detached, one-family residential unit in the back yard of a lot with an existing house. Laneway houses are available as rental units only and cannot be sold separately.

## Locked-in Lots

A lot that is unlikely to be consolidated with an adjacent lot due to existing developments on the adjacent lots.

## Massing

The form and physical mass of a building, and how it is arranged on the site. For example, the massing or bulk of a proposed building may be shifted away from a nearby park to avoid shadowing the public space.

## Mode of Transportation

The way a person gets around the city. Examples include walking, cycling, taking public transit, riding in a taxi, carpooling, or driving.

## Neighbourhood Energy Connectivity

A building design strategy that must be followed by developers to allow for that building to be connected to a Neighbourhood Energy System (see below) in the future. These requirements are described in detail in the City's Neighbourhood Energy Connectivity Standards Design Guidelines (January 2014).

## Neighbourhood Energy Systems

Shared infrastructure that provides heating and/or cooling for a cluster of buildings. These systems are most suitable in dense urban areas. Neighbourhood Energy Systems are more efficient, making it possible to use renewable energy sources that are often not available or affordable in individual buildings.

## Official Development Plan (ODP)

An area plan that is adopted as a by-law. An ODP has the ability to set legal land use rights in a particular area. Community Plans, in contrast, are approved by Council as policy documents and must rely on zoning amendments to set land use rights (see "Community Plan").

## Outright Zoning

In contrast to Conditional Zoning, Outright Zoning includes regulations that describe what can be built under zoning without any special conditions that need to be met. The Outright Zoning usually permits a lower density or height than the Conditional Zoning, so a developer must meet certain conditions—such as providing public benefits—in order to build more (see "Conditional Zoning").

## Policy

Sets of procedures or practices that reflect the broad goals for a community and guide future decisions about the city. They may address any number of topics: the vision for a particular area, the location of shopping districts, how buildings should be designed, and more. Policy is drafted by staff in consultation with the community and key stakeholders and must be approved by City Council.

## Policy Statement

A planning tool used to describe general planning principles and policy that will guide future development of a large site. Created through a comprehensive planning process, the Policy Statement provides clarity on the future of the site and guides the rezoning process.

## Public Benefit Strategy (PBS)

A plan that provides strategic direction for long-term investments in the community. It includes six key areas that support livable, healthy communities: community facilities; parks and open spaces; affordable housing; public safety; transportation; and utilities.

## Public Hearing

A meeting of City Council where members of the public can express their opinion on an issue prior to Council making a decision. A Public Hearing is a legal requirement for rezoning applications and amendments to zoning by-laws. To speak to City Council at a Public Hearing, you can register by phone or email before 5pm the day of the Public Hearing or in person between 5:30 and 6pm. More information on public hearings is available at [vancouver.ca/publichearing](http://vancouver.ca/publichearing). Written feedback can also be provided by post or at [publichearing@vancouver.ca](mailto:publichearing@vancouver.ca).

## Rate of Change and Rental Protection Policy

This policy requires redevelopment projects with six or more rental housing units in zones with a high proportion of rental housing to replace every demolished rental unit.

## Relaxation

Zoning by-laws allow for limited relaxations of certain regulations in specific circumstances. Relaxations are usually considered in the case of site-specific hardships, such as irregularly shaped lots or steeply sloping sites, where it may be difficult to comply with the regulations. In some areas of the city, relaxations may be allowed if certain guidelines or public benefits are achieved.

## Rental 100 Policy

Formally known as the Secured Market Rental Housing Policy, this program encourages the development of buildings where 100% of the residential units are rental. Units created through this policy are required to remain rental for 60 years or the life of the building (whichever is longer). The policy provides several incentives, including additional density and parking reductions.

## Rezoning

The City considers rezoning applications when the applicant wants to develop a site in a way that does not fit with the current zoning. The application must conform to the rezoning policy for an area, which defines what can and cannot be considered for the site. A rezoning does not mean that there are no restrictions on what can be built. City staff review applications with input from the community and advisory committees and make a recommendation to

City Council. When evaluating an application, staff consider the building design, community feedback, public benefits, alignment with existing policy, and more. City Council votes whether to approve, modify, or refuse a rezoning application after a Public Hearing.

### Secure Market Rental Housing

Housing in a development that is rented out at market prices and is guaranteed to be rental housing by a legal covenant or housing agreement. This guarantee is typically for 60 years or the life of a building, whichever is longer.

### Single Room Accommodation (SRA)

Refers to all rooms in rooming houses and residential hotels in the Downtown Core, as well as all non-market housing with rooms or studio units less than 320 sq. ft. The term “SRA” is more encompassing than “SRO” because it also includes small self-contained units, whereas an “SRO” refers to a single room without a kitchen or bathroom.

### Single Room Occupancy Hotels

SRO hotels were built in the early 1900s mainly to house those working in resource industries. A typical hotel has rooms of about 100 sq. ft., with shared bathrooms and minimal cooking facilities. They may be owned by the government, private owners or a non-profit.

### Social Housing

The City of Vancouver defines social housing as rental housing that is owned by a non-profit or government agency, where at least 30% of the units are occupied by households with incomes below *Housing Income Limits* (HILs) set by the Province. In certain parts of the Downtown Eastside, social housing is

defined as non-profit or government-owned rental units where at least one third of the dwelling units are occupied by those eligible for either Income Assistance or a combination of basic Old Age Security pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement, and are rented

at rates no higher than the shelter component of Income Assistance. The remaining units may be rented out at higher rates to help a project be financially viable, but are encouraged to still be at below-market rents. The target is for another third of the units to be occupied by those with incomes below Housing Income Limits.

### Supportive Housing

Housing that includes added services to help people living with mental health and addictions live independently. There are two types of supportive housing. In *congregate* supportive housing, support services are tied to the housing unit. In contrast, *scattered site* supportive housing ties support services to the person living in social housing, as opposed to the unit itself.

### Talk Vancouver

An online community panel that the City uses to get feedback on a diversity of topics, usually in the form of surveys. Anyone who lives, works or plays in Vancouver can sign up to be notified when new surveys are available for comment. More information is available at [TalkVancouver.com](http://TalkVancouver.com).

### Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy

Provides protection and assistance to tenants who must move if their building is redeveloped. This policy requires that owners or developers complete a Tenant Relocation

Plan or Tenant Impact Statement, and provide eligible tenants with compensation that can include free rent, assistance in finding alternate housing, contributions towards moving costs and a priority opportunity to move back into the new building once complete.

### Tenure

Refers to whether a household owns or rents a home or whether it is band housing (on an Indian reserve or settlement).

### Transitional Housing

Housing that provides a supportive living environment for individuals who have experienced repeated housing crises and require support and assistance over a sustained period to address their health and social needs.

### View Corridor

A field of space that protects a view from a set of prominent public vantage points. For example, new towers in the downtown must be shaped to not obstruct the public’s view of the mountains from Queen Elizabeth Park.

### Zoning

The legal tool used to regulate how land can be developed. Each part of the city has a zoning schedule that sets out rules for development. Zoning regulates the use of a site (retail, residential, office) and the characteristics of buildings on a site (height, density, and other physical aspects of the development).



For more information visit [vancouver.ca/planning](http://vancouver.ca/planning)