
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO BURNABY'S
ADAPTABLE HOUSING POLICY**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council endorse the proposed changes to Burnaby's Adaptable Housing Policy, as summarized in Section 5.0 of this report, as a basis for consultation with representatives of the housing development industry, persons with disabilities, and seniors.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to the Social Issues Committee for information.

REPORT

The Community Development Committee, at its 'Open' meeting held on 2013 January 29, received and adopted the *attached* report to propose changes to Burnaby's Adaptable Housing Policy as a basis for consultation with representatives of the housing development industry, persons with disabilities, and seniors.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor C. Jordan
Chair

Councillor D. Johnston
Vice Chair

Councillor P. Calendino
Member

Copied to:	City Manager Deputy City Managers Acting Director Engineering Chief Building Inspector Director Planning & Building Assistant Director Current Planning
------------	--

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: 2013 January 17

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

FILE: 18000 20
Reference: Adaptable Housing

SUBJECT: CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO BURNABY'S ADAPTABLE HOUSING POLICY

PURPOSE: To propose changes to Burnaby's Adaptable Housing Policy as a basis for consultation with representatives of the housing development industry, persons with disabilities, and seniors.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** the Committee request Council to endorse the proposed changes to Burnaby's Adaptable Housing Policy, as summarized in Section 5.0 of this report, as a basis for consultation with representatives of the housing development industry, persons with disabilities, and seniors.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to the Social Issues Committee for information.

REPORT**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The City engaged the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) in 2010 to conduct an assessment of current and projected need and demand for adaptable housing in Burnaby. The assessment was prompted by the amended BC Building Code design standards for adaptable units, which became effective 2009 December 31, and by an outstanding request from the Community Development Committee to review the City's existing Adaptable Housing Policy.

Based on the results of the SPARC BC assessment as well as the findings of further literature and statistical research by staff, a staff review of the current policy was undertaken. As a result of the review, this report outlines proposed changes to the Adaptable Housing Policy, as a basis for consultation with relevant stakeholder groups.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Current Burnaby Adaptable Housing Policy

Burnaby was an early innovator in the field of adaptable housing, adopting its Adaptable Housing Policy in 1989. The policy encourages developers, through the planning process, to voluntarily provide 5% of units as adaptable in new, private market, and multiple-family developments in Burnaby's four town centres (Metrotown, Brentwood, Lougheed, and Edmonds).

Adaptable housing is defined as construction which can be adapted to the needs of its inhabitants through all stages of their lives, including accommodating changing levels of ability, illness or injury. It is distinct from accessible housing, which is customized and offers immediate access for the majority of mobility limitations and/or other disabilities.

Adaptable housing is intended to provide for the access needs of occupants over time by incorporating unobtrusive design and construction features that allow for easy modifications at a future time, and at a reasonable cost, to support accessibility needs.¹ This flexibility enables occupants to age-in-place and/or remain in their home if access needs emerge. Features include, but are not limited to:

- wider doorways within accessible paths of travel, including from the front-door of the building to the unit front-door, and from the unit front-door to at least one bathroom and one bedroom located within the subject unit;
- one larger bathroom, including space for the turning radius of a mobility device;
- reinforcements in specific wall assemblies to allow for future installation of grab bars;
- continuous counter top between the stove and the sink; and
- wiring for a visual alarm² to be tied into the fire alarm system for the future installation of such in the living room and accessible bedroom.

A number of other local governments in BC have also implemented adaptable housing policies. An overview of selected municipal adaptable housing approaches is provided in Appendix 1, *attached*.

¹ According to a Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) report entitled *Regina Healthy House Demonstration Project* (2005), the cost of installing wall reinforcements in a bathroom at the time of construction to allow for the installation of grab bars at a future date is between \$50 and \$90. However, the installation of these same features in an existing unit can be between five and ten times that of the original cost.

² A visual alarm is a device that alerts inhabitants with hearing disabilities to danger and signals that emergency procedure should be followed. Visual alarms most often use steady, flashing, or strobe lights.

2.2 Updated Provincial Adaptable Housing Standards

In late 2009, new Adaptable Housing Standards were approved by the Province as part of the BC Building Code. The standards, applicable to the construction of adaptable housing in BC - whether voluntarily provided or required by local governments - were incorporated into the BC Building Code effective 2009 December 31, and are now contained within the 2012 BC Building Code. The standards are separate from accessibility requirements already existent in the Building Code that address such matters as basic access to structures, external and internal pedestrian circulation in public areas, and accessible washrooms where applicable. The revised adaptable housing standards culminated from an extensive consultation process involving a provincial working group comprised of multiple stakeholders.

The design guidelines incorporated into the Code focus on structural adjustments during the design and building phase that allow for new units to be inexpensively retro-fitted in the future as needed by occupants. The Code update applies only to one-storey units in multiple-unit, residential buildings which employ interior corridors or exterior passageways for access to the dwelling units. This application is based on background research regarding the relative estimated costs associated with installing adaptable housing features in different styles of units. The Provincial Office of Housing and Construction Standards advises that, internationally, the costs of building to adaptable housing standards varies from between 0.5% to 3.0% of total construction costs. This percentage range includes costs associated with installing adaptable features in single-family homes, townhouses, and single-level units in buildings which utilize common corridors or exterior passageways for suite access. Associated costs are, on average, the lowest for this later building type, estimated to be between 0.5% and 1.0%³. Ultimately, the standards are intended to provide consistency in how adaptable housing is designed and built across the province.

For the Committee's further information, a clear-language summary of the Code requirements for adaptable housing is *attached* as Appendix 2.

3.0 CONTEXT FOR POLICY ANALYSIS

This section outlines the major findings of the SPARC BC assessment and the results of a further review by staff, which provided a basis for the proposed changes to Burnaby's Adaptable Housing Policy presented in this report.

3.1 Impact of Existing Policy

The City's current policy has somewhat increased the supply of adaptable housing units available. Since its introduction in 1989, Burnaby's Adaptable Housing Policy has facilitated the development of approximately 200 adaptable market housing units in Burnaby's town centres. A

³ For more information please see: <http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/building/reg/accessible/faq.htm>.

To: Community Development Committee
From: Director Planning and Building
Re: Consultation on Proposed Changes to Burnaby's
Adaptable Housing Policy

2013 January 17..... Page 4

staff review of past applicable development shows a relative concentration of adaptable units in the Brentwood Town Centre.

The review has, however, indicated that existing supply does not correlate to Burnaby's changing demographics; both in terms of aging and disability, and that the rate of new supply would not keep pace with anticipated future needs for adaptable housing features.

3.2 Changing Demand

As with other communities across British Columbia and Canada, Burnaby's population is aging. According to the 2011 National Census, approximately 14% of Burnaby's population (or approximately 31,250 people) is 65 years of age or older, and approximately 19% is 60 years of age or older. The BC Ministry of Health projects that, province-wide, the percentage of those 65 years and older will increase from 15% to approximately 23% of the population by 2031. As well, as outlined by the 2006 Statistics Canada Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS), disability rates nation-wide, especially related to mobility, hearing, sight and cognition, are increasing steadily with age.

In addition to an aging population, the Statistics Canada PALS survey outlines that approximately 11% of Burnaby's population (or approximately 24,553 people) are living with an activity or health limitation⁴. This percentage increases to approximately 21% in the 55-64 age cohort.

The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) reports an emerging market for adaptable home construction based on these demographic trends. This is outlined in detail in a 2000 CMHC publication entitled *FlexHousing*⁵: *A Professional's Guide*, and discussed further in a chapter of CMHC's 2011 publication *The Housing Observer*, focusing on seniors housing. This latter document stresses that the demand for home modifications and the housing flexibility to support aging-in-place will continue to grow as the population ages⁶. A third CMHC research publication from 2008, states that "seniors who move are twice as likely to choose an apartment as those aged 30 - 64. The demand for homes that can be easily adapted [...] is likely to rise as seniors seek a more supportive, maintenance-free lifestyle"⁷.

As well, a 2006 report entitled *Seniors' Housing Demand in British Columbia over the Next Thirty Years* from the Urban Futures Institute suggests a growing demand among the aging population for non-institutionalized, private housing options – such as adaptable housing – that are flexible to their changing physical needs and easy to maintain.

⁴ Term used by Statistics Canada to refer to persons with self-reported disabilities.

⁵ *FlexHousing* is the term used by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to refer to adaptable housing/unit construction.

⁶ *Canadian Housing Observer – Chapter: Seniors Housing*, 2011, pgs. 114 and 115.

⁷ *Impacts of the Aging of the Canadian Population on Housing and Communities*, 2008, pg. 3.

Locally, the findings of a Voices of Burnaby Seniors community survey, conducted in 2007, indicate that, of Burnaby seniors planning to move, 81% want to remain in or close to Burnaby. As well, the survey recommends that Burnaby “ensure housing is or can be adapted to meet the changing needs of seniors”⁸.

Adaptable housing policies are one mechanism available to local governments to respond to the above trends and to influence the range of housing options available for citizens as they age, enabling older residents as well as residents of all ages with disabilities to remain in their community of choice.

3.3 Consistency with City Goals

These directions are further reinforced in the *Burnaby Economic Development Strategy 2020* (EDS 2020) and the *Burnaby Social Sustainability Strategy* (July 2011). The former identifies an economic opportunity in continuing to provide options for the development of seniors-oriented housing, as such housing contributes to the establishment of Burnaby as a ‘senior-friendly community’ that is able to retain and attract older residents as well as the resultant businesses and services that benefit from a concentration of seniors.⁹

The latter contains numerous references to the importance of facilitating a full continuum of housing choices in order to support the creation of ‘complete communities’, as envisioned in *Burnaby’s Official Community Plan*. Indeed, Action #15 in the *Social Sustainability Strategy* makes explicit reference to assessing the City’s Adaptable Housing Policy in order to ensure that adequate housing of this type is available to Burnaby residents. *Burnaby’s Official Community Plan*, in Section 4.2, also makes additional reference to encouraging apartment units which can be physically adapted to meet the needs of those residents with ‘special requirements’.

4.0 ANALYSIS OF EXISTING POLICY

Within the context outlined above, staff undertook an analysis of the City’s Adaptable Housing Policy based on the following elements of the existing policy:

- voluntary measure;
- concentration in town centres;
- 5% requested provision of adaptable units; and
- focus on private market, multi-family units.

Outlined below is a discussion of each element relative to the existing policy context and with recommendations for possible policy changes.

⁸ *A Survey of Burnaby Citizens 55 Years and Older*, 2007, pg. 11.

⁹ Biotechnology, Health, Life Science Sector Action Plan, *Burnaby Economic Development Strategy 2020*, pg. 109.

4.1 Voluntary Measure to Comprehensive Measure

The original purpose of the voluntary policy was to enable staff to work with developers, architects and other relevant parties (e.g., sub-trades) in a flexible manner to increase awareness of the housing needs of persons with access requirements. The policy has been pursued with all developers of multi-family developments in Burnaby's town centres in the form of a request, through the planning process, to explore the construction of adaptable housing units under a voluntary 5% provision.

This policy approach has been beneficial in expanding awareness among relevant groups and increasing the number of adaptable housing units available. However, the voluntary nature of the existing policy has meant that the number of adaptable units being constructed has not fully met both current and future projected need. For example, based on an analysis of Burnaby's historical housing statistics included in SPARC BC's report, adaptable housing units counted as only 0.3% of all new multi-unit apartment housing starts in Burnaby between 1989 and 2005, while the proportion of the population aged 65 years and older in Burnaby rose to 13% by the same period.

In order to 'shrink the gap' between market provision and demographic reality, staff are proposing that the policy be changed from a voluntary to a mandatory measure applied to all developments meeting certain criteria. A mandatory policy of this kind would also provide consistent expectations for developers as well a clear implementation framework for approval of new units, while building on the effort and results of the current policy which has resulted in increased adaptable housing provision.

It is noted that a number of other local governments in the province have instituted mandatory policies including the City of New Westminster, the District of Saanich, the City of Chilliwack, the City of North Vancouver, the Township of Langley and the City of Pitt Meadows. Other local governments such as the District of North Vancouver have implemented voluntary policies.

4.2 Concentration in Town Centres to Inclusive Application

Burnaby's current Adaptable Housing Policy focuses on the provision of units in multi-family buildings within the City's four town centres so as to ensure proximity to hubs of services and transportation. Since the original policy was approved in 1989, there has been increased recognition that opportunities for locating multi-family developments near to hubs of transportation and services have expanded from town centres, to include the City's other plan areas – urban villages, mixed-use areas, and suburban multi-family plan areas.

In order to further support the ability of Burnaby residents to live in the neighbourhood of their choosing, and to promote more universal provision, staff propose that the policy be inclusively applied to applicable multi-family developments within all Burnaby planning areas rather than only to those in the City's four town centres. An inclusively applied policy would also work to expand the potential impact of the policy to maintain or enhance the existing diversity of neighbourhood demographics, and better align the policy with Burnaby's evolving urban form.

To: Community Development Committee
From: Director Planning and Building
Re: Consultation on Proposed Changes to Burnaby's
Adaptable Housing Policy

2013 January 17..... Page 7

Several local governments in British Columbia, such as the Town of Sidney, the City of Pitt Meadows, and the District of Saanich have adaptable housing policies which are applied inclusively to all areas of the community. Other local governments, such as the Township of Langley, have applied their adaptable housing policies in a geographically-focussed manner.

4.3 5% Requested Provision to 20% Required Provision

The existing policy requests that developers voluntarily provide 5% of units as adaptable in applicable multi-family developments. As discussed above in Section 3.1, the SPARC BC report noted that approximately 200 adaptable housing units have been constructed since the policy's introduction in 1989, and that this current rate of provision would not keep pace with Burnaby's changing demographics and the emerging market for more flexible housing.

As a result of the staff review, it is proposed that a 20% required provision be established in order to address emerging demographic realities while also 'building stock' to help meet current unmet need. For example, in 2011, from the number of applicable one-storey units (approximately 302 units) in multi-family units given occupancy, approximately 60 adaptable housing units could have been secured.

Based on staff analysis of Burnaby's changing demographics, a significantly higher provision rate would be required to approach a full 'match' of the number of adaptable units with the number of persons with disabilities anticipated to be living in Burnaby beyond 2013. A significantly higher percentage, however, is considered by staff to be overly onerous as a requirement for developments in Burnaby, particularly when applied inclusively to all areas of Burnaby as proposed above. In addition, although a growing number of seniors are seeking more flexible housing options, including apartment living, it is not considered likely that all applicable Burnaby citizens will be seeking this form of housing. For example, as with any segment of the population, some individuals may choose to remain in their existing home, some may be accommodated in standard units, and some may choose to live with family or friends as they age.

The intent of any revised policy would be to provide adaptable housing units as a more consistently available housing option for Burnaby citizens rather than as a blanket measure. As such, although it is difficult to exactly 'match' estimated demand with a percentage-based provision, the proposed 20% requirement seeks to strike a middle ground between providing a range of appropriate housing options for Burnaby's changing population while also considering the impact upon local developments. As well, maintaining a percentage-based policy would limit impacts on construction costs due to the provision of adaptable units¹⁰, and would remain as a reasonable expectation for development in Burnaby.

¹⁰ Staff attended an Adaptable Housing workshop hosted by the Metro Vancouver Housing Technical Advisory Committee in 2012 April. A developer representative participated in this meeting. As outlined in his presentation to workshop participants, the aggregate costs of including adaptable housing features in multi-family developments are relatively minimal and so are not specifically included by his firm in price-setting, as existing market-driven unit prices cover these small additional costs.

For purpose-built seniors-oriented housing that utilizes interior corridors or exterior passageways for access to the dwelling units, however, staff are proposing that a 100% application be applied given the specific intent of these developments to support occupants to age-in-place as their level of ability changes. Such a measure would further enhance Burnaby as a 'senior-friendly' community promoting longer-term residency through all stages of life.

Many other local governments in the province which have adaptable housing policies in place, including the City of New Westminster, the Town of Sidney, and the Township of Langley, have implemented percentage based policies. Others, such as the City of North Vancouver require that all suites in high-density, multi-unit residential developments (excluding townhouses) follow mandatory adaptability guidelines.

4.4 Market Housing Focus to Non-Market Housing Addition

The City's existing Adaptable Housing Policy focuses on encouraging the provision of adaptable units in private-market developments. However, during the staff review it was noted that with BC Housing-funded or -financed projects, no adaptable housing features are currently required, except when mandated by the subject municipality or in specific Independent Living BC projects¹¹. This possible 'gap' creates a situation in which potential inconsistencies in adaptable housing provision could occur between different types of developments.

In order to ensure consistency between developments, staff are proposing that a revised policy address any potential adaptable housing 'gap' through application to both market and non-market developments. This would also ensure that adaptable housing options would be available and of benefit to the widest possible segment of the Burnaby community.

4.5 Housing Type

While not specifically articulated within the existing policy, adaptable housing features in Burnaby have, to-date, most often been requested in single-level units within multi-family developments. This is due to practicalities of design and the relative costs associated with providing adaptable housing features in different layouts of units over two or more stories (e.g., possible required provision of an in-suite elevator, etc.).

This experience has been common across the province in regards to adaptable housing. As such, these considerations were incorporated into the 2009 Code amendment for adaptable housing, which is applicable only to single-level units within multi-family developments that rely upon interior corridors or exterior passageways for access to the dwelling units. In Burnaby, these would be units built under zoning districts RM 1-5, C8, C9, P5, P6, P11, and CD districts, but would not apply to townhouses or multi-level units.

¹¹ For more information, please visit: <http://www.bchousing.org/Initiatives/Creating/ILBC>

To: Community Development Committee
 From: Director Planning and Building
 Re: Consultation on Proposed Changes to Burnaby's
 Adaptable Housing Policy

2013 January 17..... Page 9

Staff are proposing that any revised policy for Burnaby would adhere to these Code requirements and not seek additional provisions.

5.0 SUMMARY OF PROPOSED APPROACH

Based on the above analysis, the proposed approach to adaptable housing that has been developed, as a basis for consultation with relevant stakeholder groups, can be summarized as follows:

The City of Burnaby requires developments, through the rezoning process, to supply 20% of single-level units as adaptable in new market and non-market, multi-family developments, which employ interior corridors or exterior passageways to access the dwelling units, in all areas of Burnaby.

The City of Burnaby requires purpose-built, seniors-oriented developments, through the rezoning process, to supply 100% of single-level units as adaptable in new market and non-market, multi-family developments, which employ interior corridors or exterior passageways to access the dwelling units, in all areas of Burnaby.

The standards of adaptable design referenced in this proposed approach are derived from the 2009 December 31 BC Building Code amendment, which are now contained within the recently released 2012 BC Building Code. It is not intended that the policy apply to retrofits or renovations but to new construction only. As well, it is not intended that any additional accessible parking be required for the extra adaptable units this policy would seek to provide. This is consistent with the new Provincial standards, which does not include any corresponding revisions to the ratio of accessible parking spaces required. Nor are requirements regarding the placement of adaptable units within a building currently being proposed. This is to maintain flexibility in internal building design in order to maximize consumer choice.

For the Committee's further information, the relationship between the proposed approach and the elements of the existing policy, in relation to single level units in multi-family developments with common corridors, are detailed below:

Current Policy	Proposed Policy	Policy Considerations
Voluntary	Mandatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases supply to keep pace with changing demographics • Identifies clear expectations for developers and City staff • Increases housing choice for Burnaby residents
Town Centres Only	Inclusive (all areas of Burnaby)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides increased consumer choice • Maintains neighbourhood demographics • Provides administrative efficiencies

To: Community Development Committee
 From: Director Planning and Building
 Re: Consultation on Proposed Changes to Burnaby's
 Adaptable Housing Policy

2013 January 17.....Page 10

5% Requested	20% Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balances provision of this type of housing with the costs associated • Maintaining percentage-based provision allows greater flexibility in internal building design and unit placement • Exception for seniors-oriented housing (mandatory 100% provision) is purpose-driven to maximize ability to age-in-place
Market	Market and Non-Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides for adaptable units in BC Housing-funded or – financed projects, as applicable • Provides increased housing choice for Burnaby residents

6.0 PROPOSED CONSULTATION PROCESS

With approval of Committee and Council, staff would consult on the above proposed policy with interested Burnaby stakeholders. The process would be open with outreach to representatives including the following:

- developers and builders active in Burnaby;
- seniors and non-market housing providers;
- Urban Development Institute;
- members of the Planning and Building Department’s Access Advisory Committee;
- Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion;
- Community Living Society;
- Voices of Burnaby Seniors;
- Burnaby Seniors Outreach Services Society; and the
- PosAbilities Association.

As part of the consultation process, staff would provide context on the current policy, as well as an overview of the proposed changes and the rationale for them. Interested parties would be invited to give comment verbally or through written submissions.

Given the endorsement of the Committee and Council, it is anticipated that this consultation process would commence by Spring 2013. Subsequent results and recommendations regarding Burnaby’s Adaptable Housing Policy would be forwarded to the Committee and Council for consideration and approval.

7.0 CONCLUSION

This report presents a revised, proposed Adaptable Housing Policy for consultation with relevant stakeholder groups. The revised policy proposes to require developments, through the planning process, to supply:

To: Community Development Committee
From: Director Planning and Building
Re: Consultation on Proposed Changes to Burnaby's
Adaptable Housing Policy

2013 January 17.....Page 11

- 20% of single-level units as adaptable in new market and non-market, multi-family developments, which employ interior corridors or exterior passageways to access the dwelling units, in all areas of Burnaby; and
- 100% of single-level units as adaptable in new market and non-market purpose-built, seniors-oriented multi-family developments, which employ interior corridors or exterior passageways to access the dwelling units, in all areas of Burnaby.

The proposed policy seeks to facilitate the development of sufficient adaptable housing stock to meet current demand in Burnaby, to respond to Burnaby's changing demographics, to support emerging markets for 'flexible' housing, and to provide both increased and consistent housing choices for Burnaby residents of all ages and abilities.

It is recommended that the Committee request Council to endorse the proposed changes to Burnaby's Adaptable Housing Policy, as summarized in Section 5.0 of this report, as a basis for consultation with representatives of the housing development industry, persons with disabilities, and seniors. Subsequent results and recommendations regarding the proposed policy would be forwarded to the Committee and Council for consideration and approval.

In addition, it is recommended that a copy of this report be forwarded to the Social Issues Committee for information.



Lou Pelletier, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

RM:JS:sa/tn

Attachments

cc: City Manager
Deputy City Managers
Acting Director Engineering
Chief Building Inspector
Assistant Director Current Planning
Acting City Clerk

Appendix 1

Approaches to Adaptable Housing in the Lower Mainland and South Vancouver Island

<i>Local Government</i>	<i>Voluntary or Mandatory</i>	<i>Year Implemented</i>	<i>Applies to</i>	<i>Requested Provision</i>
City of Abbotsford	Voluntary	2005	Developments close to hubs of services and transportation with more than 40 units	5% of single-level units
City of Chilliwack	Mandatory	2012	All multi-family developments	50% of single-level units
City of Coquitlam	Voluntary	2008	Determined on a case-by-case basis	Determined on a case-by-case basis
Township of Langley	Mandatory	2010	Developments within the Yorkson Neighbourhood Plan area	5% of all single-family and townhouse units and 10% of all single-level apartment units
City of New Westminster	Mandatory	2011	All multi-family developments	40% of single-level units within applicable developments
City of North Vancouver	Mandatory Has three levels of adaptability defined	1999 updated in 2003	All multi-family developments	100% of single-level units must comply with 'Level 1' adaptability and 20% of applicable units with 'Level 2' adaptability. Incentives in place to encourage 'Level 3' provision
District of North Vancouver	Voluntary Has three levels of adaptability defined	2003	Single family, townhouses and multi-family buildings	Determined on a case-by-case basis

Local Government	Voluntary or Mandatory	Year Implemented	Applies to	Requested Provision
City of Pitt Meadows	Mandatory	2011	All multi-family developments	100% of single-level units
City of Port Coquitlam	Mandatory	2012	All multi-family developments with 10 or more units	30% of single-level units
District of Saanich	Mandatory for multi-family Voluntary for other housing types	2004	Mandatory applies to all multi-family developments. Exception for units under 452 square feet	100% of single-level units
Town of Sidney	Mandatory	1994	All multi-family developments	20% of single-level units
City of Vancouver¹	Mandatory	2002/3	All multi-family developments of more than 3 units	100% of single-level units

¹ Contained in the City of Vancouver's Building By-law. Due to the separate nature of this document from the BC Building Code, these units are designed to be 'visitable' for persons with mobility access needs rather than strictly adaptable as per Code requirements.

Summary

Adaptable Housing Standards in the British Columbia Building Code

Access	
Building Access	<p>An accessible path of travel shall be provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from the street and private parking area to at least one main entrance; • from the main entrance to all suite entry doors unless prohibited by the terrain or unusual characteristics of the site; • from the main entrance to the elevator; and • from the main entrance to each type of common amenity area (e.g. containing recreational, storage and laundry facilities) <p>Door assemblies² in the accessible path of travel shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a clear opening of not less than 850 millimeters (mm) if there is only one door leaf; • have the active leaf providing a clear opening of not less than 850 mm (in a doorway with multiple leaves); • be operable by devices which do not require tight grasping or twisting of the wrist as the only mean of operation (excluding doors not intended for resident access such as maintenance rooms) when a force of not more than 38 Newtons³ (N) for exterior doors and not more than 22 N for interior doors is applied at the handle; • have a push plate or latch releasing device except for locations where greater pressures are required to ensure proper building function; and • have a closing period (if equipped with a closer) of not less than 3 seconds measured from the door in an open position of 70 degrees to the doorway to a point 75 mm from the closed position measured from the leading edge of the latch side of the door. <p>Building entrances in accessible paths of travel shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide protection from the rain; and • have doors that are power-operated, functioning for passage in both directions <p>Doorways in accessible paths of travel shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a clear and level area; • when the door swing is towards this area, not less than 1500 mm long by a width equal to the door assembly width plus not less than 600 mm clear space beside the latching jamb of the door;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when the door swing is away from this area, not less than 1220 mm long by a width equal to the door assembly width plus not less than 300 mm clear space beside the latching jamb of the door; and • when sliding doors are power-operated or when power-operated doors swing away from the area, of not less than 1100 mm long by the width of the door assembly. Doors installed in series shall be separated by a space not less than 1220 mm plus the width of any door swinging into the separating space. <p>Doorway thresholds in accessible paths of travel, where not flush with the floor, shall be not more than 13 mm above the floor and shall be beveled.</p> <p>Where any main entrance does not provide access, a sign shall be installed as far ahead of any wheelchair obstruction is practical so as to indicate clearly the location of the accessible main entrance.</p> <p>If a walkway or pedestrian bridge connects accessible storeys in different buildings, the path of travel from one storey to the other storey by means of the walkway or bridge shall be accessible.</p>
Corridors	<p>The minimum width of an accessible pathway shall be not less than 1220 mm.</p> <p>Corridors shall provide a clear area not less than 1500 x 1500 mm adjacent to the elevator entrance and at intervals of 10 m or less, whenever the corridor exceeds 10 m measured from the elevator entrance to the end of the corridor.</p>
<p>Suite Doors and Doorways</p>	
Door Width	<p>Suite entry doors shall provide a clear opening of not less than 850 mm.</p>
Door Width <i>continued</i>	<p>Doorways for common living areas, including a minimum of one accessible bathroom and one accessible bedroom, within suites shall provide a clear opening width of not less than 800 mm.</p>
Door Hardware	<p>Doors shall be operable by devices which do not require tight grasping or twisting of the wrist as the only means of operation.</p>

	Doors shall operate when a force of not more than 22 N is applied at the handle, push plate or latch releasing device.
Door Thresholds	In doorways, where thresholds are not flush with the floor, the difference in level shall be not more than 13 mm and shall be beveled.
Door Clearance	Door assemblies for suite entry and common living areas, including a minimum of one accessible bathroom and one accessible bedroom, shall have a clear and level area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when the door swing is away from this area, not less than 1220 mm long by a width equal to the door assembly width plus not less than 300 mm clear space beside the latching jamb of the door; and • when the door swing is toward this area, not less than 1500 mm long by a width equal to the door assembly width plus not less than 600 mm clear space beside the latching jamb of the door.
Bathrooms	
Bathrooms	There shall be at least one bathroom with enough floor space to be “minimally accessible” and shall meet the following space requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear dimension from the front edge of the toilet to the facing wall shall be a minimum of 800 mm; • Space from the front edge of the bathtub to the centre of the toilet shall be a minimum of 508 mm (20”); and • Clear floor area in front of the sink/lavatory shall be a minimum of 760 mm wide by 1220 mm deep centred on the sink/lavatory.
Grab Bars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcement shall be provided in wall assemblies adjacent to a toilet and bathtub or shower to accommodate the future installation of vertical, horizontal or diagonal grab bars or towel bars, such reinforcement shall provide sufficient support to the bars such they will resist a vertical or horizontal load of not less than 1.3 kiloNewton⁴ (kN); and • Grab bars that are installed shall resist a load not less than 1.3 kN applied vertically or horizontally.

Kitchen	
Kitchen Counter Space	There shall be continuous counter space between the stove and sink.
Kitchen Faucets	All kitchen faucets within dwelling units and common amenity spaces shall be operable by devices which do not require tight grasping, or twisting of the wrist as the only means of operation.
Outlets / Switches / Other Environmental Controls	
Controls and Switches	Controls for the operation of building services or safety devices, including electrical switches, thermostats and intercom switches, intended to be operated by the occupant and located in or adjacent to an accessible path of travel as well as within a suite shall be accessible to a person in a wheelchair, operable with one hand, and shall be no higher than 1200 mm above the floor.
Outlets	Electrical, cable and phone outlets intended to be used by the occupant and located in or adjacent to an accessible path of travel as well as within a suite shall be no lower than 455 mm above the floor.
Telephone Jacks / Outlets	Telephone jacks shall be no farther than 200mm from an electrical outlet in the accessible bedroom.
Switch Types	All switch types shall be operable with a closed fist (such as rocker switches).
Visual Alarm	Wiring for a visual alarm shall be tied into the fire alarm system for the future installation of such in the living room and the accessible bedroom.

Patios and Balconies (future work)

Decks, balconies or patios provided for use by occupants of a dwelling unit shall be accessible to persons using wheelchairs by a design that does not compromise the water resistance of the building envelope.

For decks, balconies or patios directly accessed from and for the exclusive use of the occupants of a dwelling unit, access may be provided by a design that can be adapted in the future.

¹ For more information visit: www.housing.gov.bc.ca/building/reg/accessible/summary.htm.

² Doors that open into or are located in a public corridor (that provides access to exit from more than one suite), including common amenity area entry doors.

³ A Newton is a measure of force in the metric system, which, if applied for one second, will cause a 1-kilogram object starting from rest to reach a speed of 1 metre per second.

⁴ A kilonewton is one thousand newtons.