



Policy Bulletin

Bill 25, Housing and Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2025

Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs
November 28, 2025

Contents

Context: Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing and Bill 25	2
Bill 25: What are the Changes?	2
How to Ensure Compliance	3
Exemptions	3
Extensions	4
Application Process for Extensions	5
Extension Categories and Application Requirements	5
1. <i>In process of upgrading infrastructure for specific area or specific lots</i>	6
2. <i>Compliance is likely to increase risk to public health, safety or the environment</i>	6
3. <i>Extraordinary circumstances exist that prevent compliance by June 30, 2026</i>	8

Planning and Land Use Management Branch
Email: PLUM@gov.bc.ca

Context: Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing and Bill 25

In Fall 2023, Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) legislation was passed to remove zoning barriers to allow additional residential density in areas limited to single-detached and duplex housing throughout B.C. to help address the housing crisis. A review of implementation and engagement with the development sector has highlighted that barriers to the development of SSMUH still exist in some communities. Specifically, differing interpretations of where SSMUH had to be applied has created inconsistencies that limit the viability and uptake of SSMUH.

To ensure the SSMUH legislation is implemented consistently the Province has passed *Bill 25, Housing and Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2025*. This bill amends the *Local Government Act* (LGA) and *Vancouver Charter* (VC) to remove barriers to the development of SSMUH and ensure greater consistency in local government implementation.

Updates to the SSMUH Policy Manual & Site Standards are underway to support local governments in updating their bylaws to comply.

Bill 25: What are the Changes?

Restricted Zones

Bill 25 amends the *Local Government Act* (LGA) and *Vancouver Charter* (VC) to:

- Clarify that a zone that has ANY parcel of land that is restricted to duplexes and/or a single detached home is considered a Restricted Zone and must meet the minimum unit density requirements on all lots.
- Expand the definition of a Restricted Zone to include all lots where a single detached home with a secondary suite and detached accessory dwelling unit are allowed.

These amendments ensure that all residential lots in Restricted Zones (as defined in the legislation) must be zoned to permit between three and six dwelling units, depending on alignment with the following criteria, the size of the lot and proximity to transit:

- a) wholly or partly within an urban containment boundary established by a regional growth strategy, or
- b) if (a) does not apply, wholly or partly within an urban containment boundary established by an official community plan within a municipality with a population greater than 5,000 or,
- c) if neither (a) or (b) apply, in a municipality with a population greater than 5,000.

Local governments will need to comply by June 30, 2026, unless an extension is granted or an exemption to the requirements applies.

Local governments that are required to make changes as result of the amended definition of Restricted Zones should contact the appropriate transit agency as soon as practicable for information about transit frequencies to determine any lots required to permit a minimum density of six units.

Expanded Regulation-Making Authority

Bill 25 also expands the Province’s authority to make regulations for:

- “form” (i.e. building type/form, such as a duplex, triplex, townhouse, rowhouse and the number of buildings),
- “density” (i.e. building area, such as Floor Space Ratio, Floor Area Ratio and Gross Floor Area) of SSMUH housing units; and
- off-street parking requirements for SSMUH developments under six units.

These changes do not have any immediate impacts on local governments but allow the Province to make regulations for minimum standards if needed in the future. Local governments should continue to review and consider the [Provincial Policy Manual and Site Standards](#) and align bylaws and policies to support SSMUH development viability.

How to Ensure Compliance

All local governments will need to review their zoning bylaw(s) for compliance with changes to the definition of a Restricted Zone. If the zoning bylaw already meets the requirements, no action is required.

Local governments that are impacted by the changes must:

- Adopt a compliant zoning bylaw by June 30, 2026.
- Notify the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs in writing that the final zoning bylaw or zoning bylaw amendment necessary for compliance with the SSMUH requirements has been adopted, the location(s) of any exempted land(s), and the legislative provisions supporting the exemptions.
- Update their official community plan by June 30, 2027, to align with the amended zoning bylaws.

Exemptions

The exemption criteria from the original SSMUH legislation continues to apply to land captured by the amended Restricted Zone definition in Bill 25.

Under the Local Government Zoning Bylaw Regulation and Vancouver Zoning Bylaw Regulation, lands subject to a hazardous condition where development of the land to the density of use required by sections of 481.3 (3), (4) or (5) of the LGA and sections 565.03 (3), (4) and (5) of the VC can be exempted from the requirements of the SSMUH legislation providing the local government has obtained a report in which a qualified professional¹ certifies, for the local government, that:

- increasing the density would significantly increase the threat or risk from the hazardous condition; and
- the threat or risk from the hazardous condition cannot be practically mitigated.

¹ Qualified professional as described in paragraphs (c) to (f) of section 55 (1) of the *Community Charter*.

Additionally, local governments are exempted from the SSMUH requirements to permit a minimum of three to six units on:

- land that is protected under s. 12.1(2) of the *Heritage Conservation Act*;
- land that is designated as protected under a bylaw made under LGA, s. 611 [*heritage designation protection*], including land that is in process of being designated that has been given first reading prior to Bill 25 Royal Assent;
- lands subject to a heritage revitalization agreement made under LGA, s 610 (2.1) as of Bill 25 Royal Assent;
- land that is not connected to a water or sewer system (parcels must be connected to both) provided as a service by a municipality or regional district;
- land that is within a zone in respect of which the minimum lot size that may be created by subdivision is 4,050 m²; and
- a parcel of land that is larger than 4,050 m²; and
- by regulation (Local Government Zoning Bylaw and Vancouver Zoning Bylaw Regulations), land within a designated Transit-Oriented Area.

Extensions

Local governments can request time-based extensions under certain circumstances, which are detailed below. Requests for extensions related to infrastructure must be submitted to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs on or before June 1, 2026². Extensions related to extraordinary circumstances must be submitted on or before June 30, 2026.

Confirmation of the passing of a resolution by the council or board directing submission of an extension application is required to ensure that the application is authorized.

Local governments seeking extensions will need to know the results of their extension application(s) *prior* to June 30, 2026, to identify which zones they are required to bring into compliance with their SSMUH bylaw amendments (i.e., zones captured by the legislation for which no extension has been granted or sought). **We therefore recommend that extension applications be submitted to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs 45 days prior to anticipated council hearings for SSMUH-related bylaw amendments.**

An extension may be granted if the Minister is satisfied that the local government is unable, by June 30, 2026, to comply with the requirement to amend its bylaws because:

1. The local government is in the process of upgrading infrastructure that services the specific area or specific lots for which the extension is being requested;
2. The infrastructure that services the area where SSMUH would apply is such that compliance by June 30, 2026, is likely to increase a risk to health, public safety or the environment in that area; or
3. Extraordinary circumstances exist that otherwise prevent compliance in relation to the area.

² Local governments with existing extensions granted by the Minister are still valid and local governments are required to amend their zoning bylaw(s) by the date outlined in their approval.

Application Process for Extensions

The steps and timeline for local government extension applications are detailed below:

1. Local governments complete the documentation for their extension request, as detailed in the appropriate section below.

Questions about submission requirements and applications should be directed to:

PLUM@gov.bc.ca.

2. Application packages should be submitted 45 days prior to council hearing for SSMUH zoning bylaw amendments. The final deadline for applications is **June 1, 2026** or **June 30, 2026³** (depending on the reason for the extension request) by email or mail to:

Email: PLUM@gov.bc.ca

Mail: Planning and Land Use Management Branch
PO BOX 9841 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9T2
Attn: SSMUH Extension Request Application

3. Applicants will receive confirmation of receipt of the package and date of submittal.

4. The Minister will review the package and provide a response indicating whether the extension has been granted. If the extension is granted, the Minister will indicate the new deadline for compliance, which can be no later than December 31, 2030. If applications are refused, local governments have 90 days after the date set out in the notice of refusal to provide notice that they've complied with the SSMUH legislated requirements.

5. Once the conditions that necessitated the extensions have been resolved, local governments are required to update their zoning bylaws for the area(s) where their extensions applied.

6. Local governments must notify the Minister by letter, that their zoning bylaw is updated and compliant by the extended deadline.

Extension Categories and Application Requirements

The following section describes the conditions eligible for extensions, and the associated application requirements.

Local governments can apply for multiple extensions of the same or different extension categories, however, they must complete separate application forms and packages for each infrastructure project or issue.

³ Packages post-marked by the deadline will be considered on-time.

1. In process of upgrading infrastructure for specific area or specific lots

Explanation of condition

Local governments can apply for an extension to the SSMUH compliance deadline in relation to specific areas or lots where they are in the process of upgrading infrastructure which renders them unable to comply by June 30, 2026.

Examples of eligible ongoing infrastructure upgrades include, but are not limited to:

- **Upgrades that increase capacity required to meet demands of added development** – Including increasing pipe size, treatment plant upgrades, etc.

Application requirements

- Requested extension date.
- Description of the ongoing infrastructure upgrade which prevents compliance with the SSMUH zoning requirements by June 30, 2026, and explanation of why new SSMUH development cannot occur until the upgrade is complete.
- Timelines for the project.
- Map of the affected area, including the parcels for which the extension is being requested, as well as the location(s) of the infrastructure upgrade.
- Documentation to support the application which may include, but is not limited to: engineering reports, project plan, progress reports, etc.

2. Compliance is likely to increase risk to public health, safety or the environment

Explanation of condition

Local governments can apply for an extension for areas where the infrastructure that services the area is such that compliance by June 30, 2026, is likely to increase a risk to health, public safety or the environment.

Examples of infrastructure conditions that would likely increase risks in an area include, but are not limited to:

- **Wastewater** – additional input to wastewater treatment facility and/or system servicing the area would lead to untreated wastewater backups and overflows.
- **Stormwater** – current stormwater management practices and systems would exceed capacity from additional development.
- **Drinking water quality** – additional development would be connected to a water system with current/ongoing/frequent water quality concerns (water quality advisory, boil water advisory or do not use water notice) or cause insufficient water supply concerns.

Application requirements

- Description of the infrastructure deficiency and how changing the zoning in the affected area to comply with the SSMUH requirements would pose a risk to public health, safety or the environment until an upgrade is undertaken.
- Requested extension date (this must align with existing project timelines if a project plan exists. If there is no project plan in place, an estimate may be given).
- Map of area(s) to which the extension application applies.
- Documentation supporting the application, which may include, but is not limited to engineering reports.
- Remediation plan if one exists.

Extensions vs. Exemptions

Extensions

- Areas which receive an extension for SSMUH compliance are expected to align with the SSMUH legislative requirements in the future. These areas require additional time to update the necessary infrastructure to support additional development adequately and address likely risk to health, public safety, or the environment.
- Local governments are required to apply for an extension, following the information provided in this bulletin and associated application form.

Exemptions

- Land which meets the requirements for an exemption from SSMUH legislation is not intended to align with SSMUH legislation in the future unless significant action is taken which can demonstrate the exemption is no longer applicable.
- Local governments do not need to apply for an exemption, rather they must notify the Minister of what areas in their jurisdiction meet the exemptions as provided for in the legislation and regulations.
- For exemption notification requirements, please see page 13 of the [Provincial Policy Manual and Site Standards](#).

3. *Extraordinary circumstances exist that prevent compliance by June 30, 2026*

Explanation of condition

A local government is unable to update their bylaws by the deadline, due to unforeseen circumstances that divert their resources.

What is an “extraordinary circumstance”?

An extraordinary circumstance, for the purpose of an extension to comply with the requirements of the SSMUH legislation, is a situation that would result in a sufficient diversion of local government resources such that compliance with the legislation in the specified timeline would not be possible.

Examples of extraordinary circumstances that otherwise prevent compliance in relation to the area by the deadline, include but are not limited to:

- [Natural hazards](#) (flooding, forest fire);
- [State of emergency](#).

Application requirements

- Requested extension date.
- Description of the issue occurring in the community.
- Description of any work completed to comply with the SSMUH requirements up to this point, what additional work is planned to be done, an anticipated timeline when issue will be resolved and/or when compliance will be achieved.
- Documentation of extraordinary circumstances, ex: Declaration of State of Emergency.