

Regional District of Nanaimo Bylaw 2500 Project Update

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Board adopted *Regional District of Nanaimo Zoning Bylaw No. 2500, 2024* (Bylaw 2500) on January 14, 2025. Bylaw 2500 replaces Bylaw 500, which had parts that were unclear, inconsistent and challenging to administer or enforce. The updated bylaw will make it easier for residents and contractors to get the information they need and for the RDN to administer.

“We are pleased with the updated zoning bylaw that will be more responsive and effective for planning and development in the RDN, particularly given the rapid growth that we anticipate will continue well into the future,” said Vanessa Craig, RDN Chair. “The bylaw also provides a solid foundation for the next project phase that focuses on housing-related initiatives important to many residents in our region, such as affordability.”

With the bylaw adoption, the Bylaw 500 Review and Update Project has been renamed the Bylaw 2500 Project for the remaining two phases:

- Phase One: Housing and Related Bylaws and Policies
 - It will focus on initiatives related to housing and affordability.
- Phase Two: Addressing Emerging Issues
 - The final phase aims to tackle additional concerns that may arise, ensuring the bylaw remains responsive and effective.

Phase one is anticipated to begin in mid-2025 with the creation of a project terms of reference.

To view Bylaw 2500 and detailed fact sheets on the key bylaw changes, visit rdn.bc.ca/bylaws-policies-forms-maps. For updates and to ask questions about the next phases of the Bylaw 2500 Project, visit and subscribe to the Bylaw 2500 Get Involved project page at getinvolved.rdn.ca/bylaw-2500. To use the interactive map to see if bylaw changes have affected your property, visit bit.ly/Bylaw2500ChangesMap.

Key Bylaw Changes

Key changes to the bylaw include:

- **Secondary Suites:** Several changes to simplify the regulations and encourage the construction of secondary suites:
 - The definition has been updated for improved clarity between attached and detached suites.
 - Diagrams have been added to identify the different types of secondary units.
 - The maximum permitted secondary suite floor area has been increased to 100 m².


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- The land area required to permit a detached secondary suite has been reduced to 2,000 m² on parcels with community water and 4,000 m² on parcels without community servicing. This aligns site area requirements for secondary dwellings and secondary suites and provides more opportunities for detached suites.
- **Servicing Requirements:** There are no minimum site area requirements for regulating the amount of development permitted on a parcel. Instead, Bylaw 2500 includes density and servicing requirements. Servicing requirements help ensure that development is limited to what can be supported on a given property.
- **Minimum Setback Requirements:** In many zones, the minimum setback requirements have been simplified to 5 metres for all exterior lot lines and 2 metres for all interior lot lines. This provides greater clarification and reduces the interpretation of which setback applies to which lot line.
- **Shipping Containers:** Shipping containers are permitted in many zones, subject to the applicable regulations.
- **Building Height:** The height calculation method has been simplified. Height is now measured as the difference between the average natural grade of the exterior corners of a building or structure to the topmost point of a building.
- **Zone Consolidation and Subzones:** A simplified and modernized approach to applying land use zones to parcels within the area affected by the bylaw.
- **Horne Lake CD3 Zone:** Reorganization of the Comprehensive Development Zones resulting in the zone that applies to Horne Lake recreational properties now being called Horne Lake Comprehensive Zone 3 (CD3).
- **Retaining Walls:** General regulations about retaining walls further clarify how retaining walls are regulated. This approach will ensure the regulations are consistently applied while minimizing the impacts retaining walls have on adjacent properties.

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