

UNIVERSITY ENDOWMENT LANDS SMALL-SCALE MULTI-UNIT HOUSING GUIDE

PURPOSE:

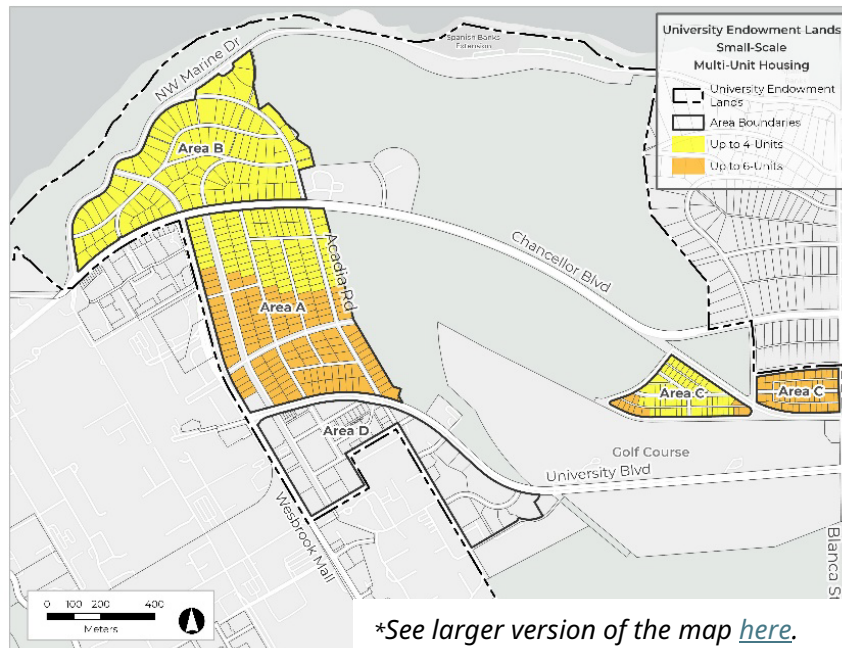
The guidelines in this document provide general guidance on the development of small-scale multi-unit housing on a lot within the University Endowment Lands (UEL). Due to the complexity of development regulations and possible infrastructure improvements necessary to support multiple dwellings on a lot, it is important to consult and hire accredited professionals to assist with the design and the application process.

BACKGROUND

The [University Endowment Lands Land Use, Building and Community Administration Bylaw](#) (LUB) was amended in 2024 to support the development of Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) in existing low-density residential zones (see the [Ministerial Order 292/2024](#)).

WHAT IS A SMALL-SCALE MULTI UNIT HOUSING

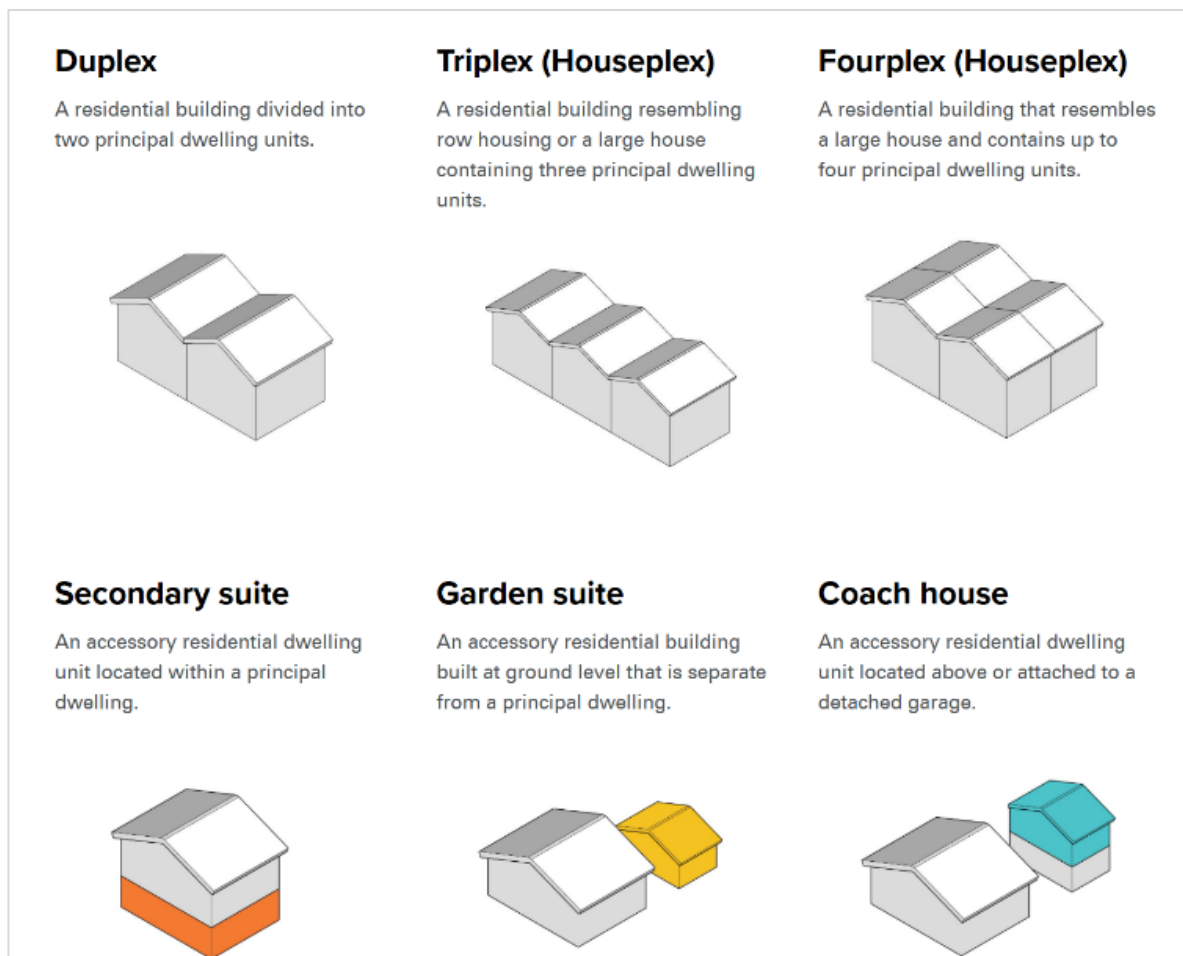
Per the LUB, small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) is defined as a lot containing three (3) or more dwelling units. As indicated in the map below, the LUB permits some lots in the R4/R6 District to have a maximum of four (4) dwelling units and some lots with a maximum of six (6) dwelling units for lots wholly or partially within 400 metres of frequent transit as defined by the legislation.



There are many ways to combine and configure the types of dwellings on a lot as long as the proposal complies with the development standards outlined in the LUB for SSMUHs. The types of SSMUH may be included, but are not limited to the following types:

- Primary housing unit + secondary suite + two detached Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
- Two duplexes
- Duplex with one secondary suite in each unit
- Triplex + detached ADU
- Fourplex
- 4-unit townhouses
- Houseplex with up to six units for some lots within 400 metres of frequent transit

Examples of SSMUH



Source: Courtesy of City of Surrey

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements apply to all infill SSMUH:

- All SSMUH developments shall be purpose-built rentals.
- No short-term rentals will be permitted in any unit.
- The owner is not required to live on the property.

Restrictive Covenants and Building Schemes

- Although SSMUH developments may be permitted in the R4/R6 District, some properties within the UEL have restrictive covenants or building schemes on title that may restrict the construction of multiple dwellings (see Bulletin on [Redeveloping Single-Family Lots](#)). Those covenants and limitations can be complicated to understand; seeking legal advice on land title is important before planning to construct any SSMUH development on a property.

Development Permit

- A Development Permit (DP) is not required for SSMUHs, however, **when a variance to the development standards is requested, approval of the variance by the UEL Manager is required.** See Schedule 11 Development Permit Applications of the [LUB](#) and the [Development Application Checklist](#) for details on Development Permits.

Building Permit

- A Building Permit is required for all residential units, including secondary suites. The application type will vary depending on how the new units are being achieved (e.g., demolition, new build, or conversion).
- All SSMUHs are required to meet current [BC Building Code](#) (BCBC) standards, and must be designed by an architect. They must be constructed to conform to the levels of the BCBC's Step Code and carbon pollution standard, as well as the UEL [Part 9 Residential Development Requirements: BC Energy Step Code and Carbon Pollution Standard Policy](#). Please refer to the [Building Permit](#) section online for information.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The table below highlights the development standards for SSMUHs. It is important to refer to the [LUB](#) and [Ministerial Order 292/2024](#) for all other applicable development standards.

Development Standards	Area A	Area B	Area C
Setbacks			
Front	12 m	12 m	5 m
Rear (1.5 metres for ADUs in all Areas)	12.0 metres for principal buildings	12.0 metres for principal buildings	8.0 metres for principal buildings
Side	5 m for principal building 1.5 m for ADUs	5 m for principal building, 1.5 m for ADUs	1.5 m for principal building and ADUs
Max height			
Duplex	2 storeys	2 storeys	2 storeys

Multiple Dwelling	2 storeys	2.5 storeys	2 storeys
Site Coverage			
1 unit	30 percent	30 percent	40 percent
2 units	30 percent	30 percent	50 percent
3 units	30 percent	30 percent	50 percent
4 units and greater	35 percent	35 percent	50 percent
Distance between buildings			
All buildings (1.5 m between ADUs and accessory buildings)	12 m	12 m	8 m

VEHICLE PARKING

Parking Space Requirements

The maximum allowable parking spaces on an R4 lot are four (4) spaces, and the maximum allowable parking spaces on an R6 lot are three (3) spaces. There is no minimum parking space requirement for any ADUs.

R-4/R-6: RESIDENTIAL INFILL DISTRICT	
Single-Family (with or without a secondary suite)	Maximum 2 spaces
R-4 lot (with 3 or more units)	Maximum 1 space per dwelling unit
R-6 lot (with 3 or more units)	Maximum 0.5 spaces per dwelling unit

Vehicle Access and Parking Areas

- Parking spaces are required to be surfaced with permanent asphalt, concrete, permeable pavers, or paving stones.
- Only one driveway is permitted per lot with standards per Schedule 3 of the LUB (also see [Policy - Driveway Entrances](#)), and compliance with the [Stormwater Management Policy](#).
- Costs for any approved driveway adjustments, including widening or curb letdowns, must be borne by the property owners.
- Vehicle access, parking, and circulation should be integrated sensitively so they are not the dominant feature of the development.
- Driveway adjustments are subject to the approval of the UEL.
- No on-street parking permits will be issued to additional unit addresses.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

- New development and redevelopment should respond sensitively to the existing neighbourhood with respect to building height, massing, and prevalent roof forms.
- The principal building is the main structure on a property (often the original single-family home), or a new duplex/triplex that forms the primary dwelling. New infill development that is similar in form to a single-family house is strongly encouraged.
- Conversions of an existing house containing more than one dwelling unit should consider the quality and livability of the resulting units.

- Larger units with multiple bedrooms and design features (i.e., indoor and outdoor amenity spaces) that support the well-being and safety of children, and the functional needs of families are strongly encouraged.

SITE DESIGN

- It is important to consider the size and siting of the building, as well as the number of dwelling units. In addition to its impact on adjacent properties, other issues to consider are site capacity to accommodate infrastructure improvements, and electrical equipment. Engaging utility providers, such as BC Hydro and FortisBC (for conversion), early in the planning process is strongly recommended.
- Locate above-ground utilities, vents, mechanical equipment (see [Outdoor Mechanical Equipment on Single Family Dwelling Lots](#)), and service areas including waste and recycling or storage areas, to the rear of buildings whenever possible, and consider proximity to windows, doors, and usable outdoor spaces to minimize impacts on adjacent properties.
- Gas and electrical meters, utility cabinets, and other mechanical equipment should be integrated into the building and site design and should be screened with high-quality, durable finishes compatible with building design if located on the building frontages.
- Landscaping for all new and infill development should create an attractive pedestrian environment along the street frontage.

BUILDING DESIGN

- While there is no particular architectural style prescribed for infill buildings, careful attention must be taken to the appropriate scale of the proposal and its impact on adjacent properties (see design guidelines in [Appendix 2](#) of the LUB).
- The architectural features and building materials should complement the principal dwelling if the existing single-family dwelling is to remain on the lot.
- High-quality, durable building materials that extend the lifespan of the building should be used.
- Blank walls should be avoided, including side or rear elevations that would be visible from adjacent streets.
- Recess the garage entry behind the primary facade and incorporate architectural detailing to avoid an auto-centric streetscape.
- Consider incorporating landscape material, decks and patios, outdoor lighting, and pathways that promote livability and architectural appeal.
- Landscape material or fencing should be considered to screen common walkways protecting the privacy of the units and adjacent properties.
- Private, semi-private, or shared outdoor areas should be functional and provided at grade where feasible.

TREE PROTECTION & LANDSCAPING

- A comprehensive landscape plan that contains all plantings including trees will be part of the permitting approval process to demonstrate compliance with the UEL [Tree](#)

Management, Protection and Removal Policy, and section 6.2 Tree Management in the UEL Official Community Plan (OCP).

- Any tree removal within a Riparian Area, Slope Stability and Geotechnical Assessment area, or lots adjacent to Pacific Spirit Park may be subject to additional requirements.
- Any tree removed should be replaced at a minimum 1:1 ratio. To minimize ecological impacts, the least invasive species should be considered, or choose those within Schedule C Section 1.7 of the UEL's Works and Services Bylaw or the Metro Vancouver's Urban Tree List.
- Consider tree removal only when a tree is unsafe or unhealthy; preservation priority should be given to those trees in the front yard.
- When replacing or planting new trees, consider species that are native (e.g., Western Red Cedar) or Western Yew in non-drought-prone areas among deciduous trees.
- When replacing or planting new trees, consider species that enhance biodiversity, are climate resilient, or contribute to food security.

WATER SEWER & UTILITY SERVICES

- Water and sewer connections must be located within the property, and be installed and maintained by the property owner.
- Only one water and sewer service connection is allowed per lot; all SSMUHs must be connected to the existing service on the property.
- Any deficiencies in the existing road, storm drainage, sanitary, and water systems for the lot will be reviewed as part of the application; the applicant is responsible for any design and construction upgrades. Please see the UEL Works and Services Bylaw.
- Any site restrictions (e.g., easements, geotechnical considerations, site constraints) may trigger additional permissions or studies.
- Please contact the UEL Administration on applicable fees for developing SSMUH on a lot.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

- The site design must incorporate stormwater management to reduce runoff and conserve water, which includes reducing impermeable surfaces wherever possible and selecting a landscape design that incorporates rainwater retention.
- Consider permeable, porous, pervious, or hard surface designed to allow water to infiltrate through the ground surface, either into underlying layers (soils and aquifers) or be stored below ground and released at a controlled rate to surface water. Permeable surfaces reduce rainwater runoff which mitigate flood impacts and help restore groundwater levels.
- Permeable surfaces are highly recommended for pathways and patios, provided they do not impede access for disabled persons.
- Landscape design incorporating rainwater retention, infiltration, and harvesting (such as rain gardens, permeable surfaces, rain barrels, and swales) is strongly encouraged (please refer to A Homeowner's Guide to Stormwater Management and Stormwater Management Policy).

FIRE SMART

- Landscaping within 1.5 metres of the home should consist of non-combustible materials like gravel, brick, concrete, or stone.
- Consider planting fire-resistant vegetation in the side yards (see [FireSmart BC Begins At Home Guide](#) for more information).

SCREENING & PRIVACY

- To protect the privacy of existing neighbours and new residents, consider installing landscaping, fences (within the maximum allowable heights), or hedges along the side property lines. Vegetative screening not only maximizes privacy but also helps to mitigate noise.
- Design the siting of any outdoor amenity space in a location that maximizes privacy.
- Windows should not have their principal orientation to neighbouring yards, or be effectively screened.
- Consider translucent glazing (glass) in upper-floor windows that orient towards adjacent residential properties.

OUTDOOR LIGHTING

- Low-level pedestrian bollard lighting is encouraged for pathway lighting
- Consider using energy-efficient LED lighting.
- Consider shielding outdoor lighting to prevent light pollution or spillage into neighbouring properties.
- Include down-lit features for lights higher than 2.4 metres (8 feet).

ACCESS & PATHS

- Provide well-constructed, unobstructed, and at a minimum 1.2m wide pathways to the entrance and the rear yard to increase overall accessibility for tenants, visitors, and emergency response teams.
- When multiple buildings are proposed on a lot, provide the street address at the street entrance of the access route to identify the units.

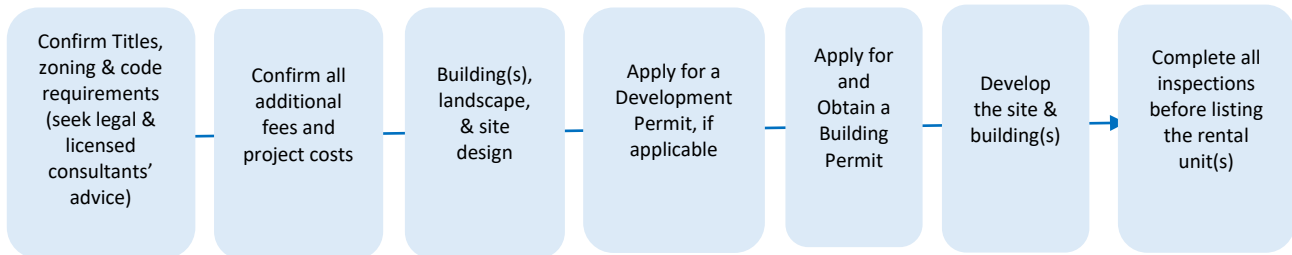
SUSTAINABLE FEATURES

- In addition to complying with Step 3 of the BC Energy Step Code, it is strongly encouraged that SSMUHs are designed to comply with the BC Energy Step Code 5 or BC Zero Carbon Step Code, ahead of the Part 9 Building Code compliance timeline in 2030. For more on Step Code requirements, visit www.energystepcode.ca
- Consider the use of clean energy, water conservation design, and building materials to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Consider building orientation that minimizes heating in the winter months, maximizes cooling in the summer months and landscaping for natural cooling.
- Consider electric vehicle charging capabilities.
- Consider solar-ready technical components to facilitate the use of solar panels.

ACCESSIBILITY

- Incorporate barrier-free universal design principles into site and building designs.
- Step-free access and [SAFERhome standards](#) are encouraged.
- Accessible travel routes shall be of a hard, slip-resistant surface with a minimum width as per requirements of the most current edition of the BCBC or the latest requirements of Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services, whichever is greater.

APPLICATION PROCESS



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I build more than six units on my residential property?

A maximum of four dwelling units, including one secondary suite or ADUs, is permitted in the R4 lots, and a maximum of six dwelling units in the R6 lots. A separate rezoning process to an appropriate zoning district would be required to develop more than six dwelling units on lots located within a [Transit Oriented Area](#) (TOA).

In addition to the Development Permit (if applicable) and Building Permit, are there any other requirements the property owner should be aware of as part of the planning process?

The applicant should also consult [BC Housing](#) on the required home warranty insurance or have an applicable exemption before any construction of a new home. The rental property must also comply with relevant regulations under the [Residential Tenancy Act](#) (RTA).

How much information is required to submit for review for a SSMUH proposal?

See [Building Permit](#) and the [Development Applications Checklist](#) (if applicable) for submission information. It is strongly recommended that the applicant provides a concept building and site plan to consult with the UEL Administration prior to preparing for the permit submission.

How long will it take to develop or redevelop the lot?

The timeframe depends on the nature and complexity of the proposal, the completeness of the information provided by the applicant, and the staff workload. In general, from consultation with relevant agencies, site planning and building design, and neighbourhood engagement (if applicable), to relevant application and permitting approvals, infill housing projects could take a year to 18 months before actual construction.

Please contact the UEL Administration Office if you have any questions regarding any items in this Guide.