

The City of Courtenay Zoning Bylaw Update Developers' Workshop

April 14, 2026



City of
Courtenay

Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge that the land we gather on is unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.



Today's agenda

- Welcome and objectives
- Recent updates and 2026 priorities
- Updates:
 - Official Community Plan
 - ACC and DCC Bylaw + Guides and Info Sheets
 - DVLAP
 - Process Optimization
- Zoning Bylaw Phase 2 – Presentation and Workshop

Zoning Bylaw Phase 2: Agenda

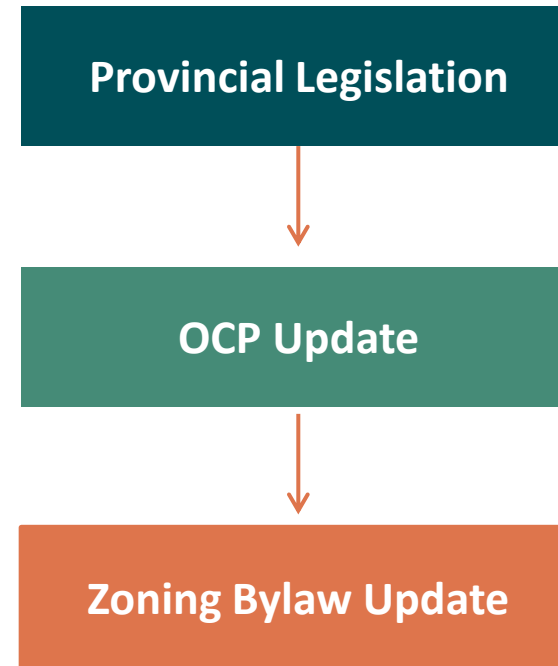
1. Introduction
2. Zoning Bylaw update process
3. Role of the Zoning Bylaw
4. Key Issues from the Background Review
5. What We Heard
6. Next Steps
7. Breakout Groups

Introduction

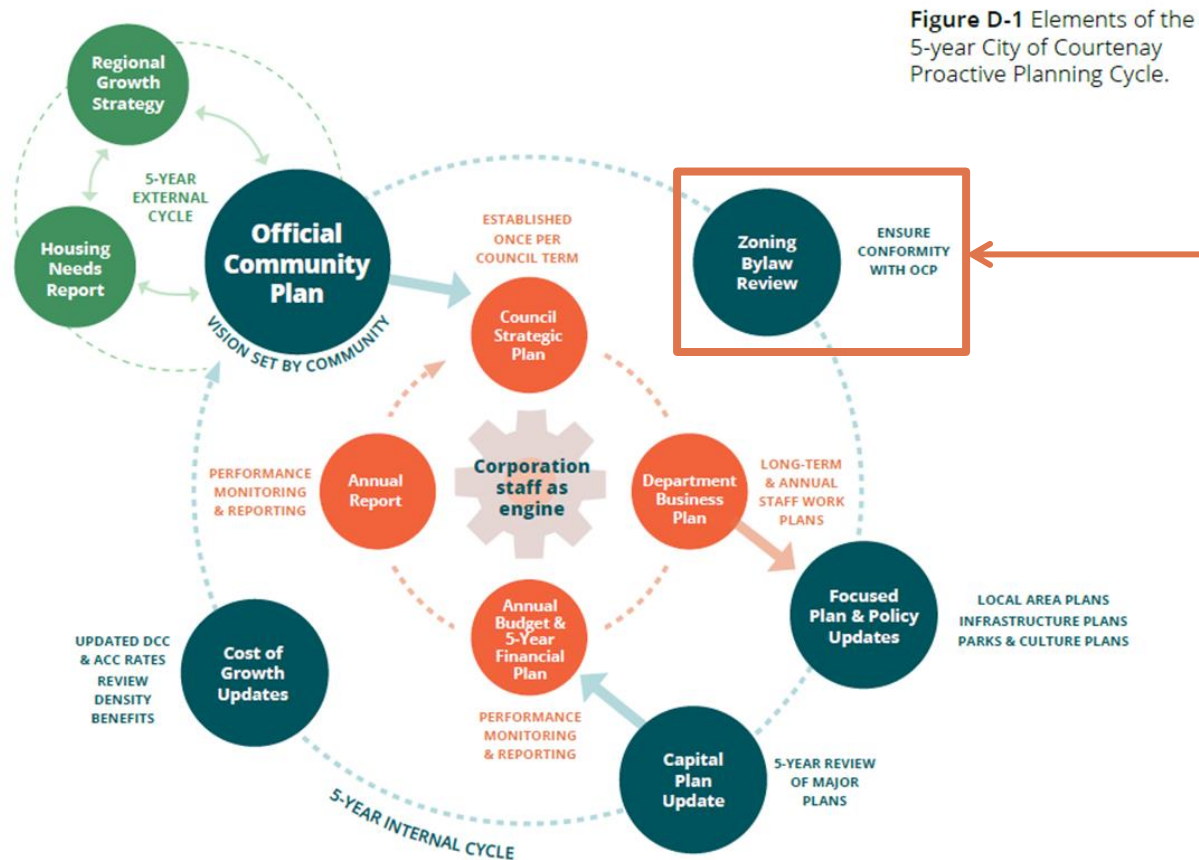
Stantec was hired in June 2025 by the City of Courtenay to update and modernize the 2007 Zoning Bylaw (and its amendments) and to align it with the new Official Community Plan (OCP) and recent provincial housing legislation.

Zoning Bylaw Update Goals

- Refining and clarifying definitions
- Collapsing and rationalizing zones
- Making zoning districts more flexible
- Updating and modernizing all sections



Context



OCP vs ZBL

- **OCP:** Sets the **long-term policy direction** for growth, land use, housing, economy, etc.
- **ZBL:** Implements the OCP by translating **policy direction into regulations** (e.g., zones, built requirement, parking)

What We've Done and What We're Doing

What we've done (Phase 1)

- Completed the Phase 1 “housekeeping” update together with the City and Patricia Maloney
- Made technical updates required to support ongoing development activity and administrative efficiency
- Finalized compliance-related revisions to align the ZBL with the OCP and applicable provincial legislation
- Having a tidy base for the ZBL while preparing for a full review

What we're doing now (Phase 2)

- **Comprehensive review** of the ZBL structure and regulations
- Updating both **administrative and regulatory** components
- **Preparing a modern, and more flexible bylaw** - content and structure
- Identifying strategies to **reduce the need for CD Zones**
- **We are NOT** pre-zoning or creating non-conforming properties

Why We Are Here Today



Why your input matters

- 1 The development community is one of the primary users to use the ZBL daily.
- 2 Development projects are a major way to implement the OCP vision.
- 3 Your experience offers practical insight into how zoning works in real life.



How your input can help

- 1 Helps shape a ZBL that is clear and user-friendly.
- 2 Identifies where zoning standards create unnecessary complexity.
- 3 Provide insights that will help translate policy into regulation that works.



Engagement context

- 1 Engagement is happening at an early stage of the ZBL update.
- 2 Early input helps inform the overall structure and priorities of the ZBL update.
- 3 The development community is one of several key groups being consult for this work, alongside Council and the public.

Setting Expectations – Role of the Zoning Bylaw

What the Zoning Bylaw update **can do**

- ✓ Setting clear permissions and rules for development
- ✓ Clarify what uses, density, and built form are permitted on a site
- ✓ Increase flexibility in base zones (e.g., Residential, commercial etc.)
- ✓ Improve clarity about the development process by simplifying zones, definitions, and standards

What the Zoning Bylaw **can't do**

- ✗ Control or administer application procedures, approvals, timelines, or administration
- ✗ Control construction costs or market conditions
- ✗ Replace development review processes or approval procedures
- ✗ Contradict or change the OCP and higher-level regulation

Key Issues from the Background Review



Structure and Usability

We will need to:

Simplify the overall zone structure

Clarify and modernize definitions for consistency

Collapse similar zones to reduce redundancy and overlap

Improve layout, organization, and navigation so the bylaw is easier to use and interpret

Key Issues from the Background Review



Density, Mixed Use, and Growth

We will need to:

Use zoning to implement provincial OCP development strategy and regulation

Make base zones flexible enough that policy-supported development does not require rezoning or site-specific regulations

Support appropriate density and mixed-use development in growth centres

Support complete communities through coordinated land-use permissions

Key Issues from the Background Review



Parking and Transportation

We will need to:

Update parking standards to better reflect current development patterns

Align parking requirements with transportation and land-use objectives

Support flexibility in how parking is provided and shared

Reduce regulatory barriers where possible

Developers' Engagement – Previous Sessions

As part of the OCP Update, the City hosted a developer-focused industry workshop, on October 21st, 2025

October 21st Workshop goals:

- Gained support for the OCP update
- Discussed land economics findings in relation to potential approaches for additional density like Density Benefits.
- Consulted on proposed Amenity Cost Charges (ACC)

**30 industry members
attended the session**

**14 industry members
answered the follow-up
survey**

What We Heard from Developers

Greater Certainty Up Front

- 1 Clearer zoning permissions and regulations
- 2 Too much reliance on rezoning and Comprehensive Development zones for predictable outcomes
- 3 Desire for more flexible base zones
- 4 Fewer surprises later in the process – reduce regulatory complexity
- 5 Shorter and predictable process time



How the ZBL update can address this

- **Clear intent statements** for zones
- **Collapsing zoning and definitions** - reducing confusion with similar zones/land uses
- **Flexible zones** - reducing the need for rezoning and CD Zones

Bottom line: better clarity early in the process

What We Heard from Developers

Density and Growth Centres

- 1 Density and height need to work economically - reflect real-world feasibility (e.g., 2 FAR)
- 2 Focus development in growth centres (multi-residential)
- 3 Advance complete communities through improved transportation options
- 4 SSMUH, to date, has limited potential in Courtenay



How the ZBL update can address this

- **Aligning zoning** and higher density development with OCP growth centres
- **Adjusting base density** and standards
- **Aligning parking requirements** with transportation and land-use objectives
- Treating SSMUH as **one housing tool**

Bottom line: clearer paths for multi-residential and mixed-use projects in growth centres without rezoning

Project Next Steps

2026

1

Today:

- Developers' Workshop
- Collaborative discussion on four (selected) topics to improve the Zoning Bylaw

2

Scenario Testing:

- Test proposed regulations such as setbacks, building heights, landscaping, and on-site servicing to understand real-world implications

3

Drafting:

- Prepare first draft of the updated Zoning Bylaw informed by background analysis and this workshop input

2027

4

Engagement:

- Engage Council, targeted interest holders including developers, and the public on the draft Zoning Bylaw

5

Final Drafting:

- Review feedback from engagement and refine the draft Zoning Bylaw

6

Council Adoption:

- Present the updated Zoning Bylaw to Council for readings, public hearing, and adoption

Breakout Groups

- Break into four topic area tables
- Each table facilitated by City staff or Stantec

Topic areas:

1

**Zoning Bylaw template and
format**

2

**Mixed Use, SMUHH, and
R3 / R4 zones**

3

**Walkability, livability, and
amenity regulations**

4

Infill development

Topic Area 1 - Zoning Bylaw Structure and Format

Leading Questions

What formats or templates make it easier to understand what's permitted on a site early in the process?

What approaches have you seen that strike the right balance between flexibility and clarity?

What would make the bylaw feel more user-friendly?

What parts of zoning bylaws typically take the most time to interpret, and how could formatting help address that?

Topic Area 2 - Mixed Use, SMUHH, and R3 / R4 Zones

Leading Questions

From a development perspective, where do zoning regulations make it hard to deliver policy?

What zoning standards – such as density, height, setbacks, or unit mix – tend to affect project feasibility in these zones?

What kinds of flexibility would make these standard zones more attractive to develop?

What specific changes would help align zoning with market realities and OCP direction?

Topic Area 3 - Walkability, Livability, and Amenity Regulations

Leading Questions

How do current vehicle parking, bike parking, and amenity space requirements help or hinder walkable and livable communities?

What would a reasonable balance on parking look like from your perspective?

What changes could improve how amenity requirements function on real sites?

Where could zoning provide more flexibility while still supporting active transportation and accessibility?

Topic Area 4 - Infill Development

Leading Questions

From your experience, what zoning regulations most affect the feasibility of infill projects?

What changes would encourage redevelopment of small and mid-sized sites?

How can zoning reduce uncertainty for infill projects while still respecting neighbourhood context?

What would make infill a more attractive development option in Courtenay?

Thank You

