The City of Vancouver’s rules and processes for building and development are complex! Through the Regulation Redesign project, we are looking to simplify and redesign the City’s land use rules to make them easier to find, use, and understand. This project is part of the City’s Corporate Plan under the goal of providing excellent service.

We are launching a comprehensive review of our regulations and policies for planning, development, and building. The key goals are to:

- Simplify, clarify, and update regulations
- Improve the consistency of regulations and policies
- Streamline permit review processes by simplifying and reducing regulations
- Ensure land use regulations align with the City’s emerging policies and priorities
- Improve communication and information sharing

WE’VE BEEN LISTENING

GET INVOLVED

Today’s Open House is an opportunity to:

- Learn about our best practice research and what we’ve heard so far
- Ask questions and provide input on the items we’re working on
- Get a sneak peek at a new online document library we’ve been working on

View the boards and fill in our questionnaire either in person or online. We want your feedback!

PROJECT TIMELINE

Spring to Winter 2018
Winter 2018 to Fall 2019
Fall to Winter 2019

WE ARE HERE
In North American cities, zoning by-laws were generally established in the early to mid-20th century. Over the decades, these regulations have been amended extensively albeit in their traditional form. Recently, some cities have started to update their zoning by-laws to modernize how information is presented, and make them more accessible, user-friendly, and interactive.

### Tables and Charts

Some cities have started to organize sections of their zoning by-laws (such as permitted uses and siting information) into tables and charts, or matrices. In some instances, written provisions have been entirely replaced with tables. This new formatting approach helps clarify and simplify information.

| Table 6.1: Permitted Uses in the Residential Zone |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|
| Purpose          | R1 | R2 | R3 | R4 |
| Apartment Building | ✓  |   |   |   |
| Detached Housing  | ✓  |   |   |   |
| Dormitory         | ✓  |   |   |   |
| Low-rise Housing  | ✓  |   |   |   |
| Long-term Care Facility | ✓ |   |   |   |
| Mobile Homes      | ✓  |   |   |   |
| Townhouse Housing | ✓  |   |   |   |
| Accessory Building | ✓ |   |   |   |
| Bed and Breakfast | ✓  |   |   |   |
| Home Occupation   | ✓  |   |   |   |
| Lodging House     | ✓  |   |   |   |
| Private Home Day Care | ✓ |   |   |   |

### Graphics

Including graphic materials such as illustrations, figures, photos, and diagrams to support regulatory text has become increasingly common to assist with information interpretation. Graphics can help users understand regulations and assist in conveying complex concepts.

### User Guide

Many cities include a non-statutory user guide at the beginning of their zoning by-laws. The user guide contains helpful information about the purpose of the by-law and how it is organized. It describes how to navigate the by-law and may also explain the more technical aspects of zoning.
3 Regulation Redesign
Simplifying rules for city building

Best practices

INTERACTIVE MAPS & WEBSITES

In many local and international cities, zoning information is often supplemented with an online mapping tool. Most commonly, these online maps are linked to geographic information systems (GIS) that present spatial or geographic zoning and policy information. In representing zoning information through readily accessible online maps, users are able to quickly and easily access regulatory information related to a property (e.g. permitted uses, flood zones, heritage, environment). Links are included within the maps, directing users to relevant sections of the by-law.

Online Zoning Application Features

- GIS-based web mapping applications
- User-friendly, accessible, and easy to navigate
- Interactive, clickable maps
- Hyperlinks to corresponding information in the zoning by-law and related land use documents
- Quick access to existing regulations as well as guidance on redevelopment potential
- Reliable data
- Mobile friendly

Interactive, clickable map from Miami, FL provides users with a variety of visual layers and shows site-specific information in the side pannel.

The City of Portland’s Zoning app allows users to explore zoning details or search for an address. This app includes high-level summaries of base zones, overlay zones, plan districts, historic and conservation districts, and natural resource management plans.
Regulation Redesign

Simplifying rules for city building

What we’ve heard so far

STAFF CONSULTATION

In the summer of 2018, we reached out to over 370 City of Vancouver staff about the issues that they were encountering with the City’s land use regulations and policies. These were the top four themes we heard.

1. Definitions in the Zoning and Development By-law are confusing and need updating
2. There is a need to simplify and harmonize how different by-laws relate to each other, e.g., Zoning, Building, License, Parking
3. The rules are being inconsistently interpreted and applied
4. The rules are hard to understand, which leads to them being applied differently

INFORMATION CONFLICTS WITHIN BY-LAWS AND ACROSS REGULATIONS / POLICIES

It’s hard to know which rules apply to a site, and how to find out

The various document types are confusing and disorganized

I CAN’T FIND THE INFORMATION I NEED

EVEN WHEN I FIND WHAT I’M LOOKING FOR, I CAN’T UNDERSTAND IT

THE RULES ARE BEING INCONSISTENTLY INTERPRETED AND APPLIED

The Zoning and Development By-law is too wordy, technical, and hard to read

It’s hard to know when rules change, and how they have changed

POP-UP EVENTS

Over a two-week period in late 2018, we held a series of pop-up engagement events at local construction stores and at the Development and Building Services Centre. Over 170 people shared their experiences with Vancouver’s land use regulations and policies.

Their comments were consistent with the four themes listed above. In addition, specific regulations were identified for needing further exploration, including:

- counting floor area, including exclusions
- measuring height
- defining porches, decks and balconies
- demolition permits.
What we’ve heard so far

ROUNDTABLE EVENT

In November, we held a roundtable event to seek input from individuals with direct experience with the City’s land use regulations and policies. The sectors represented were construction, real estate including non-profit developers, a variety of other businesses, arts and culture, and heritage.

Comments from participants built upon the four key themes heard to date. Stories from participants also highlighted additional areas for improvement.

What are the key issues you have been facing with the City’s land use regulations?

• There is over-regulation
• There needs to be a culture change within the City
• Staff need more authority and discretion
• Roles of advisory committees and the Board of Variance need to be reviewed

If you were Director of Planning for the day, what would you want to change?

• Move from regulating to enabling
• Simplify regulations and eliminate where possible
• Write regulations in a clear and straightforward manner that reduces interpretation
• Address conflicts within City regulations and between regulations of other jurisdictions
• Allow more discretionary decision making by staff and the Director of Planning
• Improve online access to information
• Improve inter-departmental communication and coordination to manage regulation interpretation

REGULATION REDESIGN EXTERNAL GROUP

The Regulation Redesign External Group (RREG) is an advisory group comprised of 16 regular users of Vancouver’s land use rules. The members represent a cross-section of construction and development industry experts who have vast experience working in Vancouver and elsewhere. Their role is to provide guidance to advance the project, to advise on issues and opportunities, as well as to support engagement with their member organizations or networks.

In their first two meetings, the RREG identified a number of issues and opportunities, which resonated strongly with what we’ve heard so far:

• Uncertainty in regulations and policies
• The volume of City priorities combined with the pace of new policies
• Conditional and outright approval and Director of Planning discretion
• Access to regulatory information
• Permit processing: technology, staff and processes
Certain sections of the Zoning and Development By-law are difficult to navigate, with:

- Terms and regulations not consistently organized e.g. not alphabetized
- Inconsistent naming
- Repetition of regulations
- Lack of supporting information e.g. reference to related regulations, explanatory diagrams

The Regulation Redesign Project is looking to improve the organization of information within the By-law, to make specific regulations easier to find.

**Section 2 Definitions**

Key objectives include full alphabetization, a consistent naming convention, icons to reference major land use categories, a table to structure the information, and a margin to allow for explanatory diagrams and references.

No change to content is currently being proposed. Updates to definitions will be part of a future phase of work.

**Section 10 General Regulations and Section 11 Additional Regulations**

Key objectives include reorganizing regulations into more distinctive categories (e.g. land use-specific), alphabetization, a consistent naming convention, and use of tables to structure the information.

**Upcoming Work:**

**District Schedules**

District Schedules are difficult to navigate and understand. They use long, complicated narratives, complex technical terms, and convoluted language. The key objective is to develop a new format for all District Schedules based on best practices of other municipalities, staff and public input.
Document Inventory
The City of Vancouver has hundreds of regulatory documents that set out the rules and expectations for developing in Vancouver. These include zoning district schedules, community plans, design guidelines, and bulletins explaining how rules are applied. To date, there has been no reliable source that lists out all the documents related to land use and development.

Staff have compiled a comprehensive inventory of regulatory documents from a myriad of existing sources. Documents have been:

- sorted into types (e.g. plans, policies, guidelines, bulletins) as well as categories (e.g. location, use)
- re-named with a consistent naming convention
- consolidated where possible
- identified to be rescinded where they are no longer relevant.

This inventory will make up our Land Use Document Library, which will be easily accessible on the City’s website.

User Guide
We’re developing a guide to help users navigate the Zoning & Development By-law more easily. It is intended to make the By-law easier to use by explaining its structure, and outlining how to find basic zoning information in clear, progressive steps.

Website Improvements
The City’s regulatory documents are currently located on many different web pages, making them hard to find. Regulation Redesign has created a new web page that is intended to be the landing page for finding zoning and development-related documents: vancouver.ca/zoning.

The web page currently includes a new video introducing what zoning is. Soon, it will house a new Land Use Document Library. In time, the web page will also allow users to find the zone and policies for an address through an interactive mapping application.

Get a sneak peek of the new vancouver.ca/zoning webpage at one of our computer stations!

Tell us what you think of the new webpage!
The City has seven advisory committees that provide advice on various matters related to land use and development:

- Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee
- First Shaughnessy Advisory Design Panel
- Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee
- Development Permit Board Advisory Panel
- Urban Design Panel
- Vancouver Heritage Commission
- Vancouver City Planning Commission

We are reviewing the membership composition and functions of these committees. A survey was conducted in December with committee members and staff liaisons, seeking input on their committee experience to help inform and guide any potential future changes. Results will be presented to City Council in 2019.

**Tell us what you think**

**WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE WORK ON?**

In your experience, which topics or rules need the most attention, to either fix or remove?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs work</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counting floor area (e.g. exclusions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measuring height</td>
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<td>Defining balconies, decks, porches, etc.</td>
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<td>Horizontal angle of daylight requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site coverage</td>
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<td>Building depth, yards</td>
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<td>Parking</td>
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<td>Secondary suites</td>
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<td>Lanes/laneway house</td>
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<td>Demolition permits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trees/landscaping</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
WHAT WE’LL WORK ON NEXT

Some of the priorities for the next phases of Regulation Redesign include the following:

» Simplify the Zoning and Development By-law
  - Focus on Sections 2, 10 and 11
  - Draft a new format for district schedules
  - Consolidate administrative sections
  - Explore how to simplify and streamline complex regulations e.g. floor area, height, measurements
  - Explore reducing regulations

» New regulations and policies
  - Develop criteria for the creation of new regulations, policies and guidelines
  - Improve processes for how new regulations and policies come into effect

» Website improvements
  - Focus on improving access to information

» Land use advisory committees
  - Update roles and mandates

» Simplify the Zoning and Development By-law
  - Introduce a User Guide
  - A new format for Sections 2, 10 and 11
  - Remove gendered terminology
  - Repeal outdated policies and guidelines
  - Launch a new vancouver.ca/zoning webpage

STAY INVOLVED!

- Visit our website, check out our videos, and sign up to our email list to stay informed: vancouver.ca/RegRedesign
- Sign-up for our mailing list
- Fill out a feedback form
- Follow us on Twitter #RegRedesign