

Family Housing Policy

April 2024

Adopted by City Council on June 27, 2024

To take effect on, September 1, 2024

1. Application and Intent

Housing choice is a key goal of the Victoria Housing Strategy (2016-2025) and is a vital part of ensuring that residents can stay in Victoria as they move through the stages of life. However, the number of homes with three- or more bedrooms has not kept pace with demand and has created a challenge for households wanting to have children or otherwise grow their families. Many families are acutely affected by this significant gap in the City's housing stock as these units are crucial to meeting the needs of larger families or of families with children of different sexes (due to National Occupancy Standards related to bedroom sharing). Larger units can also serve a diversity of other populations, including multi-generational families and people seeking a shared living situation.

The Family Housing Policy aims to help Victoria families overcome the difficulties of finding housing that meets their needs by encouraging the inclusion of more two-

bedroom and three-bedroom units in new multi-unit residential developments. In addition, advisory design guidelines are provided that are intended to serve as an educational and aspirational best practice resource in the development of higher density family housing in the city.

This policy establishes the City's expectations for the provision of housing suitable for families and is intended to assist applicants and City staff in preparation and review of rezoning applications for new multi-unit and mixed-use residential buildings to ensure the supply of homes that meet Victoria's family housing targets. However, it is not intended to fetter Council's discretion and each rezoning application will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis on its merits.

Subject to exemptions outlined in Section 4 of this policy, for development proposals consisting of four or more storeys, this policy applies citywide.

2. Policy Specifics

Bedroom Composition

All applications for new multi-unit residential developments consisting of four or more storeys should meet the following minimum percentages of unit types:

- a. Stratified ownership developments:** A minimum of 30 per cent of total project dwelling units contain two or more bedrooms, with a minimum of 10 per cent of total units containing three or more bedrooms.
- b. Purpose-built rental developments:** A minimum of 25 per cent of total project dwelling units contain two or more bedrooms, with a minimum of 5 per cent of total units containing three or more bedrooms.

All calculations should round up to the nearest whole number.

For example, in a proposed four-storey stratified building containing 42 dwelling units, five of the dwellings should be three or more-bedroom homes.

For projects that combine stratified ownership and purpose-built rental units, thresholds for each tenure type are expected to be met.

The above bedroom composition target will be secured through a legal agreement as part of the land use approvals process.

3. Advisory Design Guidelines

The *Advisory Design Guidelines for Family-Friendly Homes and Spaces* outlines best practices for family-friendly planning and design of residential buildings and open spaces, specifically to achieve the following:

- To ensure livability of family-friendly environments, including through provision of amenity spaces that foster a range of activities, recreation and play through site and building design.
- To enable opportunities for social and inter-generational interaction in residential development.
- To enable easy access and circulation for families in all new residential development.
- To ensure baseline standards for air and daylight access in family-friendly buildings.
- To support the flexibility of residential uses in accommodating changes to households/families over time.
- To leverage the potentials of alternative residential tenures or models to enable and provide family-friendly homes and communities.
- To ensure a baseline standard for adequately sized family-friendly developments and homes.
- To facilitate ease of entering and exiting for family members, for mobility aids, and for storage.
- To facilitate well-being, self-care and care-giver responsibilities by design.
- To ensure adequate spaces within homes for family/household activities and social connection including livable spaces for rest, individual activities, play and privacy, and space for gathering and learning around food.
- To encourage conveniently accessible, usable and safe private outdoor amenity areas in family-friendly residential development.

4. Policy Flexibility and Exemptions

Applications addressing the following housing needs are not expected to conform to this Policy:

1. Seniors' housing
 - a. Projects licensed under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act or Hospitals Act
 - b. Independent Living projects subject to the Residential Tenancy Act
2. Supportive housing
3. Affordable rental housing

Applicants seeking to develop a project which does not comply with the policy bedroom composition expectations must include a rationale in their application explaining the inability to comply with this policy.