



Chapter 3

Neighbourhoods and Housing

Residential
Affordable, Rental and Special Needs Housing

3.1 Residential

3.1.1 Housing and Land Requirements

BACKGROUND

The District's changing age composition will be an important driver of future housing demand. The demand for single-detached dwellings will continue, but at a slower rate than previous decades, and the demand for other forms of housing will increase. The demand for apartment units is anticipated to be limited in the short term, but will increase over the next two decades due to the aging population. More medium to high-density dwelling units will also be required for a growing and changing population.

To meet the population projection of approximately 109,000 people by 2031, Maple Ridge will require an additional 6,250 to 7,500 dwelling units, depending on dwelling type mix and average household size.

As the population ages there will be more demand for a range of housing suited to seniors, from independent living units to assisted living units to full care facilities. Seniors housing should be encouraged and supported in locations central to community amenities and services, including public transit. Aging-in-place options for seniors housing will also be encouraged.

Affordability, location, and availability of ground-oriented and apartment style units will be major factors in attracting new residents and young families to Maple Ridge, and providing greater choice for the changing needs of current residents.

Redevelopment should be encouraged through infill and densification policies to enhance the Town Centre and to minimize the urban footprint.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles reflect the shared community values of Maple Ridge residents and provide a framework for the Housing policies in the Official Community Plan:

Principle 4

The community recognizes that components of the built and natural environments contribute to the character of Maple Ridge and sense of community, and in turn, "placemaking."



"We value the rural character and green spaces with the diversity of landscapes and visual spaces together with the distinct historical neighbourhoods and a vibrant downtown core in a community that is proud of citizen leadership and involvement."

Source: Group Vision created during OCP Visioning Sessions, March 2006.

Principle 5

Building a unique community character is critical to ensuring that Maple Ridge does not succumb to pressure and becomes like "everywhere else." It requires strong political and community commitment and attention to a variety of aspects (landscapes, built form, heritage, mix of uses, urban design, services, etc.).

Principle 6

The community recognizes the need to foster the history of Maple Ridge and enhance historic areas.

Principle 7

Special places and neighbourhoods are valued as significant components of the larger community, each with unique attributes

Principle 8

Unique and enjoyable communities and places are created through community improvements, quality design, less obtrusive signage, pedestrian friendly environments, accessibility and viewsapes.

Principle 28

Pursue a more contained and densified urban environment. Finish developing existing areas within an urban boundary before going to new areas and reserve new areas (e.g. Thornhill) based on careful analysis of opportunities and constraints.

Principle 29

The community values a wide range of housing choices that provide variety and mix of housing type, density, lot size, character, tenure, and affordability.

Principle 32

The community recognizes that heritage value must not be lost as enhancements to existing neighbourhoods, including infill and other activities to strengthen neighbourhoods, occur in the future.

Principle 35

Respect for the landscapes of Maple Ridge should shape community design, contributing to sense of place and better fit with landforms.

Principle 37

Housing choice is critical to meeting the diverse needs of current and future residents of Maple Ridge – special needs, singles, young families and an aging population.

ISSUES

The District should ensure that a variety of housing types are available to accommodate the diverse and changing needs of its current and future residents.

OBJECTIVES

To encourage a variety of housing types and densities to meet the diverse residential needs of the District.

To accommodate future population growth and change through appropriate land use designations and strategies that are consistent with community and regional goals and objectives.

To incorporate sufficient flexibility into Area Plans to allow for response to changing market and housing demands.



POLICIES

- 3 - 1 Maple Ridge will:
- a) designate an adequate supply of residential land to accommodate future residents;
 - b) accommodate growth through infill by:
 - i. promoting a mix of housing types and tenures to support diverse needs (e.g. income and abilities) lifestyles (e.g. age and values), and preferences. Examples include housing for older residents; housing for persons with disabilities; rental and ownership housing; new homeowners and empty nester housing; and ecologically sensitive design; and
 - ii. developing other strategies as appropriate for meeting the future housing needs of residents.

3.1.2 Community Character and Sense of Place

ISSUES



Residential neighbourhoods are places where people connect and develop a sense of community. Stabilizing, preserving and enhancing the character of neighbourhoods are therefore key elements in fostering a sense of community.

Residents of Maple Ridge appreciate the character of this community. Its uniqueness includes its physical make-up and its social characteristic. Citizens have stated that Maple Ridge's character must be protected and enhanced, to avoid becoming like "everywhere else".

By encouraging new residential development to the Town Centre, through compatible infill, and Area Planning the shape and character of our neighbourhoods can be retained.

OBJECTIVES



- To foster stable residential neighbourhoods by preserving and enhancing their identity and character.
- To promote a compact and complete community.
- To encourage infill development that is sensitive to the existing residential and neighbourhood context.
- To promote healthy, socially sustainable neighbourhoods through policies that encourage overall community wellness.

POLICIES

Community Health, Identity and Neighbourhood Stability



- 3 - 2 Neighbourhoods are considered to be physically stable areas. New development within neighbourhoods will be consistent with this concept and will respect and reinforce the existing physical characteristics of buildings, streetscapes and open space patterns.
- 3 - 3 The stability of a neighbourhood's physical character is one of the keys to a successful community. Maple Ridge will protect residential neighbourhood character by:
 - a) encouraging the maintenance and rehabilitation of the existing housing stock;

- b) discouraging incompatible uses;
- c) discouraging higher volume traffic-generating developments on local roads;
- d) maintaining an adequate quality of community services and facilities; and
- e) encouraging the conservation and restoration of heritage resources.

3 - 4 To foster a sense of community and neighbourhood identity, Maple Ridge will encourage:

- a) opportunities for public gathering spaces in and around community nodes;
- b) pedestrian scale and neighbourhood identity at major intersections and around community commercial nodes through coordinated development and design elements;
- c) special streetscapes for individual neighbourhoods;
- d) preservation of heritage elements as a unifying feature throughout the community;
- e) housing styles that help to distinguish individual neighbourhoods;
- f) neighbourhood identification through distinctive streetscape elements;
- g) landscape elements that integrate nature into neighbourhoods, and enhance liveability;
- h) physical connections to provide for safe, convenient and pleasant access within neighbourhoods;
- i) perimeters and gateways to neighbourhoods through improved urban design elements and appropriate transition spaces at the edges of neighbourhoods;
- j) transition spaces or buffer zones between neighbourhoods and adjacent incompatible non-residential uses.



3 - 5 Maple Ridge will support Healthy Community Land Use Strategies and community wellness principles by:

- a) recognizing the link between the provision of a range of housing options and social sustainability;
- b) promoting affordable housing developments that incorporate access to services through interconnecting roadways, bicycle paths, and pedestrian links;
- c) promoting activities that contribute to the needs, health, development, and well-being of individuals within the community, as well as the overall community;
- d) encouraging the provision of an appropriate scale of services at the neighbourhood level;

HEALTHY COMMUNITY LAND USE STRATEGY

Uses land in a manner that is environmentally sound and promotes a healthy, self-sufficient, connected, safe and inclusive community. It reflects the needs of a community, incorporates environmental protection principles, and includes universal accessibility for all citizens.

Social Planning Advisory Committee





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- e) promoting diverse, safe and secure neighbourhoods that facilitates neighbourly support, resulting in a healthier, more resilient community;
 - f) encouraging public spaces that offer opportunities for community interaction; and
 - g) promoting affordable housing developments that meet diverse housing needs.

3.1.3 Residential Designations

The residential land use designations are a key component for achieving a compact community. The main residential land designations are:

Rural Residential designation, which permits agricultural uses and single detached and duplex housing on acreage located outside the Urban Area Boundary where municipal servicing is not available.



Suburban Residential designation, which permits single detached and duplex housing in areas located outside of the Urban Area Boundary that may have water service but which are not connected to the municipal sanitary sewer system.

Estate Suburban Residential designation, which permits single detached and duplex housing in areas outside the Urban Area Boundary. The properties are within the Fraser Sewer Area or on property where sewer services have already been connected.

Urban Residential designation, which permits a range of housing types within the Urban Area Boundary. Infill and densification may be possible based on compatibility and locational criteria on properties which can be fully serviced to municipal standards. Within the Town Centre, medium to high density housing in combination with commercial, cultural, leisure and institutional uses are encouraged.



Within the Urban Residential designation, two residential categories exist, the components of which are outlined in the policies that follow:

- Neighbourhood Residential
- Major Corridor Residential

OBJECTIVES

To manage residential growth through infill and intensification in a manner that respects neighbourhoods and the existing physical character of the surrounding areas.

To direct urban growth within the Urban Area Boundary.

POLICIES

Rural Residential

- 3 - 6 Urban-level residential densities will not be supported in areas designated Rural Residential.
- 3 - 7 Maple Ridge will encourage retention of the rural character of Rural Residential areas and will support agricultural uses and low density, single detached and duplex dwellings. The Rural Residential land use designation is generally characterized by 0.8 hectare lots where community water is available, and 2.0 hectare lots where on-site water is provided.
- 3 - 8 Maple Ridge will conduct further studies to consider permitting garden suites as a form of infill in Rural Residential areas.
- 3 - 9 Lands designated Rural Residential are located outside the Urban Area Boundary and servicing for these areas is to be provided through private systems.



Suburban Residential

- 3 - 10 Urban-level residential densities will not be supported in areas designated Suburban Residential.
- 3 - 11 Maple Ridge will support some agricultural uses and single detached housing on large suburban lots. Lot sizes within this land use designation are generally 0.4 hectares in size.
- 3 - 12 Maple Ridge will conduct further studies to consider permitting garden suites as a form of infill in Suburban Residential areas
- 3 - 13 Areas designated Suburban Residential are located outside the Urban Area Boundary. City water is required and sewage disposal is provided through a private system.

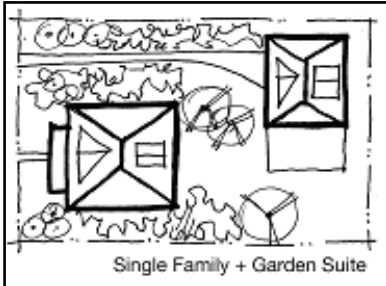
Estate Suburban Residential

3 - 14 Urban-level residential densities will not be supported in areas designated Estate Suburban Residential.

3 - 15 Maple Ridge will support single detached and two-family residential housing in Estate Suburban Residential areas. The Estate Suburban Residential land use designation is characterised generally by 0.4 hectare lots.

3 - 16 Areas designated Estate Suburban Residential are located outside the Urban Area Boundary, but are within the Fraser Sewer Area, or on property where sewer services have already been connected. Properties within the Fraser Sewer Area that are not connected to servicing, will require municipal approval prior to connecting to sewer.

3 - 17 Maple Ridge will conduct further studies to consider permitting garden suites as a form of infill in Estate Suburban Residential areas.



Urban Residential

3 - 18 Maple Ridge will support a range of densities within the Urban Area Boundary. Urban Residential consists of three residential categories with the following characteristics:

1) **Neighbourhood Residential** – General

Characteristics:

- a) a maximum of one principal dwelling unit per lot and an additional dwelling unit such as a secondary suite or *garden suite* (pending further studies to be conducted by the District);
- b) density that is based on the current zoning of the property, or surrounding neighbourhood context;
- c) single detached dwellings will remain the predominant housing form within neighbourhoods. Other housing forms are possible, subject to compliance with the Neighbourhood Residential Infill policies;
- d) is not within the Town Centre, a neighbourhood with an Area Plan, a Community Commercial Node, or located on a Major Corridor as illustrated on Figure 4.

Neighbourhood Residential

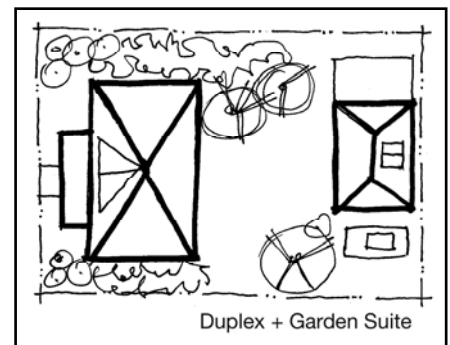
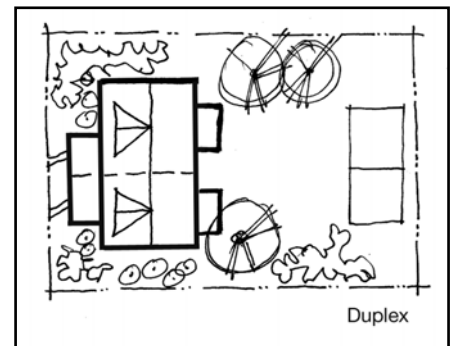
generally refers to a residential property, within an established residential neighbourhood. Neighbourhood residential properties are not located within the Town Centre, a Community Commercial Node, a neighbourhood with an Area Plan, or along a Major Corridor as illustrated on Figure 4

2) **Major Corridor Residential – General**

Characteristics:

- a) Major Corridor Residential is characterized by the following:
 - i. has frontage on an existing Major Road Corridor as identified on Figure 4 Proposed Major Corridor Network Plan, or has frontage on a road built in whole or part to a collector, arterial, TransLink Major Road, or Provincial Highway standard;
 - ii. may be adjacent to Community Commercial Node, or designated commercial centre.

- b) includes ground oriented housing forms such as single detached dwellings, garden suites (pending further study), duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhouses, apartments, or small lot intensive residential, subject to compliance with Major Corridor Residential Infill policies.

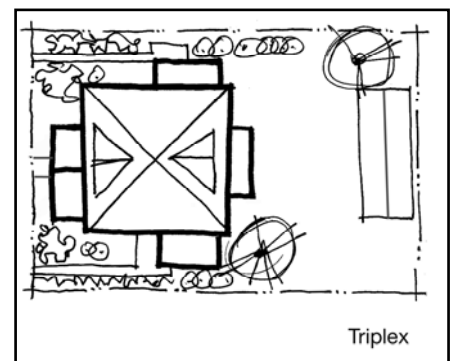


3.1.4 Residential Infill And Compatibility Criteria

Compatibility refers to development that “fits’ with the character of a neighbourhood. It does not mean that the development looks the “same” as neighbouring development, rather the housing form is similar in size, scale, massing and architectural elements. As an example, attached housing forms could be considered compatible with single detached housing if they were ground oriented and similar in height and architectural details.

3 - 19 **Neighbourhood Residential Infill** is permitted subject to compliance with the following criteria:

- 1) Infill development on a property that is larger than the prevailing lot size of the surrounding neighbourhood or existing zoning of the lot may include the following:



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- a) a possible change in lot size and configuration providing that:
 - i. the proposed lot area and widths should be not less than 80% of the lot area and width prescribed under the predominate or adjacent zoning in the surrounding neighbourhood;
 - ii. the proposed lot configuration is similar to the prevailing lot pattern that exists within the neighbourhood; and
 - iii. the proposed housing form is consistent in scale and massing to that of the surrounding neighbourhood.
 - b) a change in unit type - unit types such as single detached dwellings, secondary suites, garden suites (pending further study), duplexes and triplexes that resemble a single detached dwelling, with an emphasis on orientation to the street.

2) Neighbourhood Residential infill must be designed to be compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood and will be evaluated against Policy 3-21.

3 - 20 Major Corridor Residential Infill developments must be designed to be compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood and will be evaluated against the following criteria:



- a) building forms such as single detached dwellings, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhouses, apartments, and small lot intensive residential developments subject to Policy 3-21;
- b) a maximum height of two and one-half storeys with an emphasis on ground oriented units for all developments except for apartments;
- c) a maximum height of four storeys for apartments; and
- d) adherence to Development Permit Guidelines for multi-family and intensive residential developments as outlined in Chapter 8 of the Official Community Plan.

3 - 21 All Neighbourhood and Major Corridor Residential infill developments will respect and reinforce the physical patterns and characteristics of established neighbourhoods, with particular attention to:

- a) the ability of the existing infrastructure to support the new development;

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- b) the compatibility of the site design, setbacks, and lot configuration with the existing pattern of development in the area;
 - c) the compatibility between building massing and the type of dwelling units in the proposed development and the surrounding residential properties;
 - d) the location, orientation, and visual impact of vehicle access/egress in relation to:
 - i. adjacent developments
 - ii. the street
 - iii. the pedestrian environment
 - e) minimizing adverse parking and traffic impacts on the existing neighbourhood;
 - f) a gradual transition of scale and density through the design of building mass and form, such as:
 - i. reduction in building heights at the edges of a development;
 - ii. location of lower density components towards the perimeters of a site; and
 - iii. concentration of density to the centre of a development or towards a non-residential boundary;
 - g) retention and preservation of significant trees, other natural vegetation, and environmental features;
 - h) maintaining adequate light, view and privacy for residents on adjacent properties or in adjacent neighbourhoods;
 - i) conservation of special landscapes such as gardens, or built-form features, including heritage buildings, that contribute to the unique character of a neighbourhood.

3.1.5 Urban Reserve

- 3 - 22 Maple Ridge will avoid non-contiguous expansion of the Urban Area Boundary.
- 3 - 23 Maple Ridge will not support urban level densities in the Urban Reserve until an Area Plan is adopted pursuant to policy 3 –25.
- 3 - 24 Maple Ridge will retain the Thornhill area as a long term Urban Reserve area. Urban development will not be supported in the Thornhill Urban Reserve Area until the population threshold exceeds 100,000 people for the District and the residential capacity within the existing urban area is approaching build-out.



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- 3 - 25 Prior to urban development occurring in the Thornhill Urban Reserve, the following must have been achieved:
- a) approval of an amended Regional Context Statement by the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) Board;
 - b) approval of an extension to the Fraser Sewer Area by the Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District (GVS&DD) Board;
 - c) an Area Plan adopted by Council which includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. policies regarding the types of residential development, land use patterns, minimum density requirements, and appropriate phasing for the area;
 - ii. a fiscal impact assessment study;
 - iii. identification of environmentally sensitive areas, ecosystems and the impact of development;
 - iv. agricultural impact assessment to minimize the impact of development on adjacent farm lands;
 - v. an aquifer groundwater management study; and
 - vi. a transportation plan that includes an integrated system which balances all modes of transportation, including transit.
- 3 - 26 Until policies 3 - 24 and 3 - 25 are satisfied, the minimum parcel size for subdivision of land designated Urban Reserve is 2.0 hectares.



3.2 Affordable, Rental and Special Needs Housing

ISSUES

CORE NEED

A term used by senior government to determine eligibility for social housing subsidies. A household is considered to be in core need when appropriate housing costs more than 30% of its gross income in shelter costs (either rent or mortgage payments).

Source - Affordable Housing for Maple Ridge.

Due to land shortages and the expensive housing market in the Lower Mainland, housing affordability is a Regional issue that directly impacts Maple Ridge. While housing prices are lower in Maple Ridge than the median price within the Region, houses are still expensive relative to average household income and in comparison to house prices in many other communities in Canada.

Housing affordability is of particular concern for both homeowners and renters living in the community with almost one-quarter of homeowners considered to be in Core Need. Housing affordability is also an issue for renters, where 34% are spending in excess of 30% of their gross income on housing. The percentage of residents spending greater than 30% of gross income on housing is an issue of concern because it's an indicator that these residents have less disposable income available for other basic needs, such as food, transportation, clothing, recreation and leisure.

According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's rental market report, Maple Ridge has very few bachelor suites and apartments with three or more bedrooms. Similarly there is a lack of two-bedroom townhouse units. The lack of these types of rental housing contributes to the issue of housing affordability in the community. In addition there are waiting lists for affordable rental accommodation, and vacancy rates are not considered to be within a healthy range.

A significant portion of the rental housing stock in Maple Ridge is composed of secondary suites. Secondary suites increase the affordability of single detached housing for the homeowner, and at the same time provide affordable accommodation for renters. Unfortunately secondary suites are often considered an insecure form of rental housing because many have not been upgraded to satisfy building code requirement, and as a result may be subject to municipal bylaw enforcement.

Local and Regional service providers have identified that there is a shortage of special needs housing units within the community. Special needs housing is commonly defined as housing for people, who for varying reasons cannot have their housing needs met through the traditional housing market. Research has identified that there are waiting list for social housing, shelter beds, transition housing, community care facilities, and supportive housing units, and that providers regularly turn away those in need of such housing.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles reflect the shared community values of Maple Ridge residents and provide a framework for the Affordable, Rental and Special Needs Housing policies in the Official Community Plan:

Principle 29

The community values a wide range of housing choices that provide variety and mix of housing type, density, lot size, character, tenure, and affordability.

Principle 37

Housing choice is critical to meeting the diverse needs of current and future residents of Maple Ridge – special needs, singles, young families and an aging population.

Principle 39

A healthy community depends on social services that meet the needs of a diverse population.

OBJECTIVES

To encourage the provision of affordable market and non-market housing and rental accommodation in Maple Ridge.

To continue the secondary suite program within the District in order to encourage housing affordability for homeowners and renters.

Where appropriate, to support the concept of garden suites on residential property in order to provide housing affordability for homeowners and renters, and rental accommodation in the community.

To recognize that mixed socio-economic housing contributes positively to overall community health, and to facilitate the provision of special needs housing within the District (including social housing, community care facilities, transition housing, shelter housing and supportive housing units) for people with physical, mental, and/or lifestyle challenges.



POLICIES

- 3 - 27 Maple Ridge will regularly update its affordable housing strategy to identify specific targets, objectives, opportunities and municipal incentives for affordable, rental, and special needs housing. The affordable housing strategy will be initiated at the discretion of Council and in consultation with the Social Planning Advisory Committee.
- 3 - 28 Maple Ridge will encourage partnerships with government and non-government agencies to support the creation of affordable, rental and special needs housing in the community.
- 3 - 29 Maple Ridge recognizes that secondary suites and other detached dwelling units in residential neighbourhoods can provide affordable and/or rental housing in the community. Maple Ridge is committed to ensuring that bylaws and regulations are current, and responsive to community issues and needs.
- 3 - 30 Maple Ridge will undertake a further study to consider density bonussing as a means of encouraging the provision of affordable, rental and special needs housing, and amenities.
- 3 - 31 Maple Ridge supports the provision of rental accommodation and encourages the construction of rental units that vary in size and number of bedrooms. Maple Ridge may also limit the demolition or strata conversion of existing rental units, unless District-wide vacancy rates are within a healthy range as defined by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
- 3 - 32 Maple Ridge supports the provision of affordable, rental and special needs housing throughout the District. Where appropriate, the provision of affordable, rental, and special needs housing will be a component of area plans.
- 3 - 33 Maple Ridge will encourage housing that incorporates “age-in-place” concepts and seniors housing designed to accommodate special needs.