
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Sept. 4, 2024

Ministry of Housing

Standardized designs arrive to help build more homes faster

VANCOUVER – People building small-scale, multi-unit housing can plan faster and at a lower cost by using free standardized designs now available to the public.

“From a historic investment in public housing to cracking down on speculators to cutting red tape for different forms of housing, our government is leaving no stone unturned to deliver more housing of all kinds for people everywhere,” said Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Housing. “Set housing designs mean that people will be able to build more beautiful homes in their communities, faster than ever before.”

Most of the designs are based on “building blocks” that can be mixed and matched, to add features such as a garage or bedrooms, and stacked up to three storeys high. They include concepts for duplex, triplex, quadplex and townhouse designs. Also included are a variety of roof shapes and exterior finishes, so all the designs can blend in seamlessly with existing neighbourhoods, keeping with the intent of small-scale, multi-unit housing to add density. There are also designs for accessory dwelling units, such as laneway homes, and a fully adaptable cottage suitable for aging in place.

Each design complies with the 2024 B.C. Building Code and can be customized for different lot sizes and configurations for use throughout B.C., recognizing that minor amendments may be required to manage specific site conditions. Design files are available for download and have also been compiled into a catalogue for ease of viewing, all at no cost.

Standardized design will result in time and cost savings as local governments and builders become familiar with the plans, leading to quicker approvals and construction, which is a key strategy of the Homes for People action plan to unlock more homes faster by creating the conditions to encourage faster housing construction.

This is part of government work underway to deliver more small-scale multi-unit housing to neighbourhoods and fix outdated zoning rules that have stopped these homes from being built.

Starting in 2017, the B.C. government has taken action to deliver homes for people in every part of B.C. To date, nearly 80,000 homes have been delivered or are underway. In 2023, the Province launched the Homes for People plan. Actions included in the plan are expected to deliver hundreds of thousands more homes over the next 10 years.

Quotes:

Dan Winer, executive lead, Small Housing –

“As an advocate for gentle-density housing for several years, Small Housing is thrilled to see the

release of standardized housing designs in British Columbia. These free designs will not only provide faster, more affordable housing solutions for residents across the province, but will also encourage industry and financial institutions to get behind modular and off-site construction. We applaud the provincial government and look forward to seeing these homes built in communities across our province.”

Chris Hill, president, BCollective –

“We are excited to see this project come together and potentially create future demand for off-site construction. While these homes don’t necessarily need to be built in a facility, the systemized approach aligns well with the potential for prefabrication. The first standard home project will be like every other home but, with repetition, the entire supply chain will become more efficient, leading to reduced costs and faster, more affordable delivery of homes.”

Michael Leckie, principal, Leckie Studio Architecture + Design –

“Our designs for the Standardized Housing Design Project are intended to be modern interpretations of the local building vernacular across the province. The designs are highly adaptable to a range of site and contextual conditions with multiple options for total floor area, roof form and esthetics. The highly systematic approach to both the design and construction of these small infill housing typologies will complement the streamlined development approval process, providing a co-ordinated effort towards housing attainability in British Columbia.”

Learn More:

Explore the new standardized designs here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/construction-industry/building-codes-standards/bc-codes/innovation>

To learn more about government’s Homes for People action plan, visit:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023HOUS0019-000436>

To learn about the steps the Province is taking to tackle the housing crisis and deliver affordable homes for British Columbians, visit: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/housing/>

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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Details on B.C.'s standardized housing designs made free to public

- Designs include seven different concepts for small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) and three different concepts for accessory dwelling units (ADU), all of which are highly customizable.
- The component-based standardized design system is a kit of parts that can be mixed and matched to suit users' needs. The system is composed of interchangeable floor plans that can be layered two- to three-storeys high and includes options for garages and an increased number of bedrooms. The blocks are then paired with a variety of roof shapes. Homes can be personalized with cladding and roofing material selections, as well as optional solar shading devices such as window awnings or a front porch.
- The designs meet Energy Step 4 in Climate Zone 5, making them viable in the communities in which most British Columbians live. They may be viable in colder scenarios depending on local energy-efficiency requirements, sun exposure and other factors.
- The designs were created by a multi-disciplinary team:
 - Leckie Studio Architecture + Design led the design effort and created the digital design files and the informational catalogue for subsequent designers to reference and modify.
 - BCollective Homes performed construction costing analysis and helped optimize the designs for eventual pre-fabrication.
 - Carbon Wise Consulting performed the energy modelling and created templated energy modelling files and compliance checklists to give subsequent energy modellers a head start.
 - Christine Lintott Architects provided additional technical support and feedback to Leckie Studio during the design phase.
 - Wisser Projects led early consultation and designed the project requirements to meet feedback from local governments and the construction sector.

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