



# TRANSIT-ORIENTED AREAS

The purpose of this FAQ is to provide information about the Transit-Oriented Area Provincial Legislation.

## 1. What are Transit-Oriented Areas?

Transit Oriented Areas (TOA) are defined as an area within a prescribed distance from a transit station. TOA's are intended to be areas of mixed-use, vibrant communities centred around bus exchanges. TOA's were introduced to encourage urban environments where amenities are within public transit, walking, cycling or rolling distance of housing.

## 2. How many Transit-Oriented Areas have been identified for Nanaimo?

The Province has identified three bus exchanges that are subjected to the TOA regulations: Woodgrove, Country Club, and Vancouver Island University (VIU). Lands located within a 400- meter radius of the center point of the bus exchange are subject to a new Minimum Allowable Density Framework. Refer to the [Transit-Oriented Area Designation Bylaw No. 7382](#) to view which lots are subject to the new regulations.

## 3. What is the Minimum Allowable Density Framework?

The Province has developed a Minimum Allowable Density Framework (MD Framework) with prescribed densities and heights that the City of Nanaimo must allow when exercising zoning powers in relation to a residential use. The MD Framework is designed to ensure predictable and adequate densities. The table below outlines the new prescribed Minimum Allowable Density Framework applicable to Nanaimo.

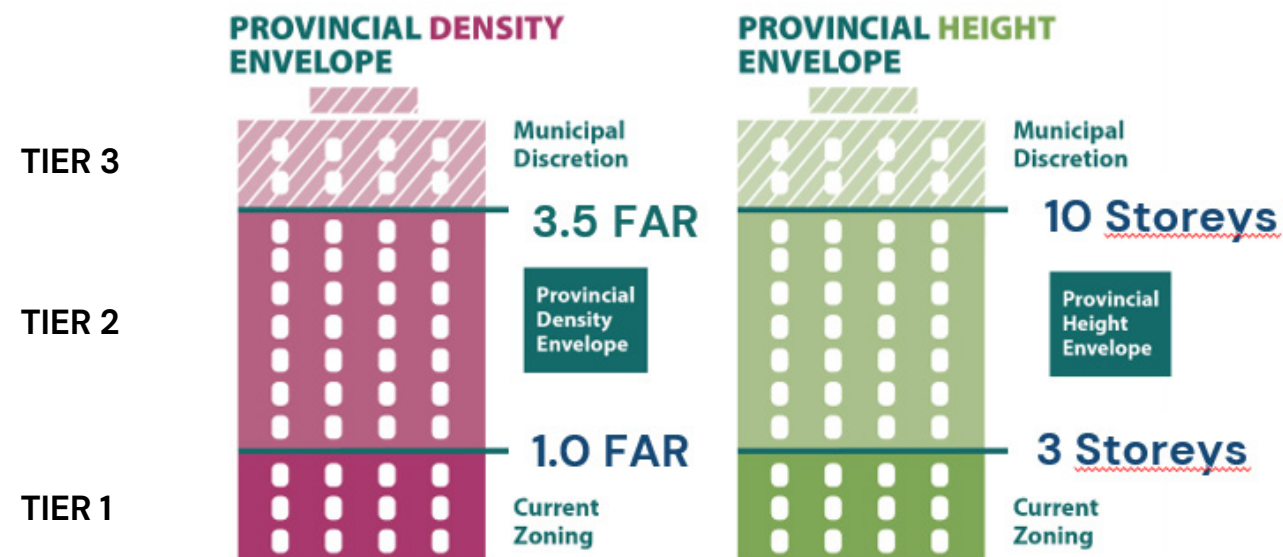
Bus Exchange	Prescribed Distance (metres)	Minimum Allowable Density (Floor Area Ratio) (FAR)	Minimum Allowable Height (storeys)
Woodgrove Country Club Vancouver Island University (VIU)	Less than 200 m	3.5	Up to 10 storeys
	220m - 400m	2.5	Up to 6 storeys

## 4. How does the Minimum Allowable Density Framework work?

The framework is divided into three tiers (Refer to Figure 1 for a visual representation of the Minimum Allowable Density Framework.)

1. Tier 1: Current Zoning (Existing Allowable Density): Maximum density and building height allowed under existing City of Nanaimo zoning, prior to the MD Framework.
2. Tier 2: Provincial Density Envelope (MD Framework Density): The required increase in allowable density prescribed through the regulations that must be allowed by the local government when exercising zoning authority in relation to rezoning applications or amendments to zoning bylaws.
3. Tier 3: Municipal Discretion (Discretionary Additional Increase in Density): Any increase in allowable density above the prescribed densities as authorized by the local government.

Figure 1: Provincial Density Requirements in relation to Local Government Authority



The Provincial Density Envelope establishes “up to” regulations. For example, the minimum allowable Floor Area Ratio (FAR) within 200m of a bus exchange is 3.5 **or less** and the minimum allowable height is 10 storeys **or less**. This provides an allowable range or envelope of densities and building heights within TOAs. Local governments retain the zoning authority to established densities and heights greater than those prescribed by Provincial regulations.

5. **How does the Minimum Allowable Density Framework work in relation to the City of Nanaimo’s Zoning Bylaw?**

Developments that exceed the minimum allowable densities and height prescribed in the City of Nanaimo’s Zoning Bylaw are still required to complete a rezoning application. The new Minimum Allowable Density Framework does not change the existing rezoning process in the City of Nanaimo. As part of the rezoning application process, the City of Nanaimo still has the authority to: establish height and densities greater than the provincial regulations; secure conditions to development such as parkland and road dedications; and consider factors such as hazard conditions and infrastructure deficiencies.

6. **Will all lots that are subject to the TOA regulations be able to achieve the allowable density or building height?**

No. The TOA regulations recognize that there may be instances where an individual lot cannot achieve all the allowable density or building height, including:

- A site cannot physically accommodate all the available density or building height (e.g. due to site size, shape, land constraints, etc.).
- Cost considerations of type of construction, building code requirements (e.g. concrete versus wood-frame or mass timber construction).
- Land assembly issues.

7. **Are there any future TOA’s identified for Nanaimo?**

No. The Province has not identified any future TOAs to be designated in Nanaimo.


8. **Are there any new parking requirements?**

Yes. The new parking legislation restricts local governments’ ability to require residential off-street parking in TOAs, except for parking for people with disabilities. This does not eliminate all parking. The City of Nanaimo still retains the authority to regulate:

- Parking space design requirements;
- Vehicle parking spaces for other uses in TOAs (e.g. commercial);
- Long- and short-term bicycle parking;
- Accessible parking;
- Electric vehicle charging receptacles and electrical outlet boxes.

Refer to Nanaimo’s [Off-Street Parking Regulations Amendment Bylaw 2024 No. 7266.03](#) to learn what changes have been made.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE

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www.nanaimo.ca/goto/housinglegislation 