



VILLAGE OF ANMORE REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date:	June 12, 2026	File No: 3900-30
Submitted by:	Josh Joseph, Manager of Development Services	
Subject:	Proposed Zoning Amendments – Clarification on Basement Exemption	

Purpose / Introduction

The purpose of this report is to seek Council direction with respect to amendments to the Zoning Bylaw related to basement floor area exemption clarifications.

Recommended Options

THAT Staff be directed to initiate an amendment to the Anmore Zoning Bylaw No. 568-2017 relating to section 5.25 Basement Exemption and section 5.6 Building and Structure Height as outlined in the June 12th, 2026, staff report prepared by the Manager of Development Services.

Background

At the May 5th Regular Council Meeting, staff presented for Council's consideration amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to clarify aspects of Section 5.25 related to basement floor area exemption. Council provided the following motion and requested that staff bring visual impact modelling demonstrating the implications of the regulations for basement exemption as currently drafted:

“THAT Council defer consideration of Proposed Zoning Amendments - Basement Exception and Single-Detached Dwelling Floor Area Cap.”

Staff have created illustrations of the potential visual impacts resulting from the apparent massing permitted under the current basement exemption. To address these concerns, staff are seeking direction to amend the zoning bylaw to limit the basement to one storey. In addition, staff have identified a misalignment in the zoning bylaw as they relate to the calculation of building height and recommend amendments to the relevant sections as further

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described in the report. The amendments are recommended to clarify the intent of the regulation in order to facilitate development that is consistent with the semi-rural character of Anmore.

Discussion

The following outlines the proposed amendments for the relevant sections of the Zoning Bylaw as they relate to basement floor area exemptions and building height calculations.

Basement Exemption

The Zoning Bylaw defines Basement as “a storey having more than one-half its height below the average finished grade”.

Section 5.25 Basement Exemption includes the following:

“In residential use zones the following will apply, unless expressly provided for in a Zone:
Basement exemption In Family Residential Use zones, all or part of the basement floor area shall be exempted from the calculation of Floor Area by a percentage calculated under subsections (a) to (d).

(a) Subject to subsection (b), 100% of the Floor Area shall be exempted where the first storey floor height is less than 1.22 m (4 ft) above average finished grade.

(b) The exemption under subsection (a) shall not exceed the lesser of the basement floor area or 25% of the total lot area.

(c) There shall be no exemption of a basement from Floor Area where the first storey floor height is greater than 2.22 m (7 ft) above average finished grade.

(d) Where the first storey floor height is greater than 1.22 m (4 ft) and less than 2.22m (7 ft) above average finished grade, then the percentage of Basement Floor Area to be exempted shall be calculated on the basis of the following formula where “A” represents the percentage to be exempt and “x” represents the first storey floor height above the average finished grade (see Figure 1, provided for illustrative purposes only):

$$A = 100 \times (2.22 - x)$$

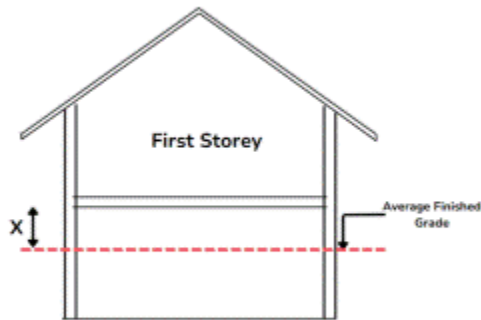


Figure 1

The intent of the above regulation is to exempt portions of a building from floor area calculations for areas of the building that do not provide additional massing.

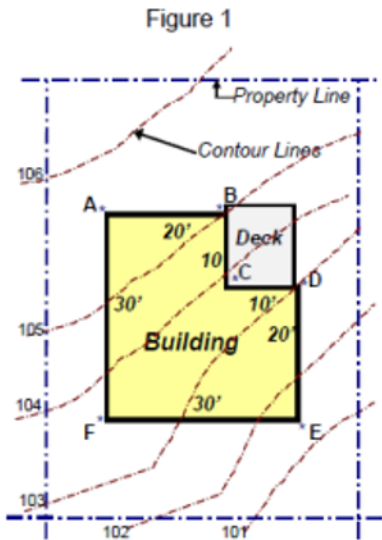
The basement exemption is calculated from the average finished grade. These averages are established by calculating the elevation changes along wall segments on all sides of the building and averaging them out as illustrated in section 5.5.6 of the zoning bylaw:

5.5.6 An example of calculating **average grade** is shown below (see Figure 1, provided for illustrative purposes only).

Example:

Wall Section Average Grade	X	Length	= Y
A-B 106.5 + 105.0 ÷ 2	X	6 m	= 634.50
B-C 105.0 + 104.0 ÷ 2	X	3 m	= 313.50
C-D 104.0 + 103.0 ÷ 2	X	3 m	= 310.50
D-E 103.0 + 101.5 ÷ 2	X	6 m	= 613.50
E-F 105.5 + 104.0 ÷ 2	X	9 m	= 942.75
F-A 104.0 + 106.5 ÷ 2	X	9 m	= 947.25
Totals:		36 m	= 3744

Total Y ÷ Total perimeter length = Average grade
3744 ÷ 36m = 104 m



Because average finished grade is calculated using the full perimeter of the building, including sections that may be designed up to three storeys above grade, the resulting average can be disproportionately skewed where the finished grade is determined by the builder. Grading, in addition to building design, may then be used to achieve two, or even three, lower storeys to meet the technical requirements for a basement floor area exemption.

Without a cap on how many storeys can claim this exemption, there is a regulatory incentive on sloped lots to undertake extensive excavation and cutting to achieve multiple exempt lower storeys.

On downslope properties (lots situated below the road bed), additional building massing is typically hidden below street level and is typically not apparent from the roadway. However,

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on upslope properties (lots situated above the road bed), the massing associated with multiple exempt storeys may be highly visible and directly oriented toward the street frontage.

Staff and the Village Consultant have provided visual examples of building designs and lot grades where portions of a building may be fully exempt from height calculations while still contributing to the apparent massing of the structure, including buildings with up to five storeys, as illustrated in Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4. The visual impact of this apparent massing may be further amplified on larger lots where the permitted FAR allows for larger buildings and corresponding increases in exempt building massing.

Wall Section	Wall Section Average Grade		Length (m)			Y
A-B	$100.5 + 100.5 \div 2$	X	30	=		3015
B-C	$100.5 + 115.1 \div 2$	X	55	=		5929
C-D	$115.1 + 115.5 \div 2$	X	30	=		3453
D-A	$115.1 + 100.5 \div 2$	X	55	=		5929
Totals:			170			18326
Total Y ÷ Total perimeter length = Average Grade						
$10348 \div 96\text{m} = 107.8\text{m}$						

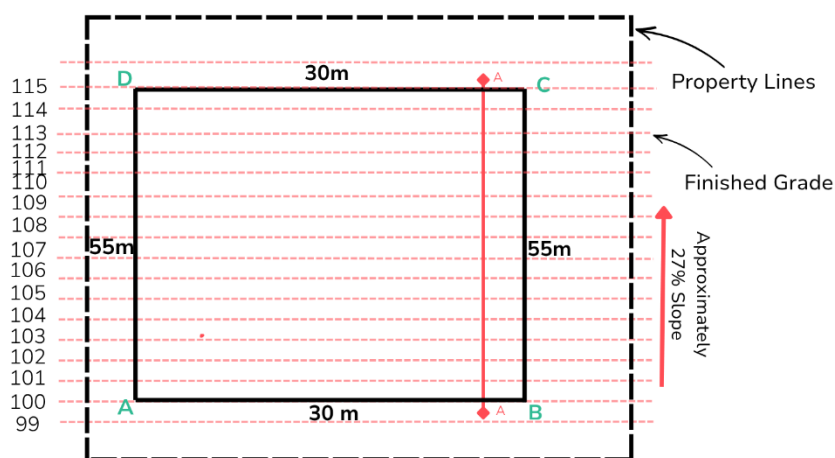


Figure 1. Average Grade Calculation – Upslope Lot

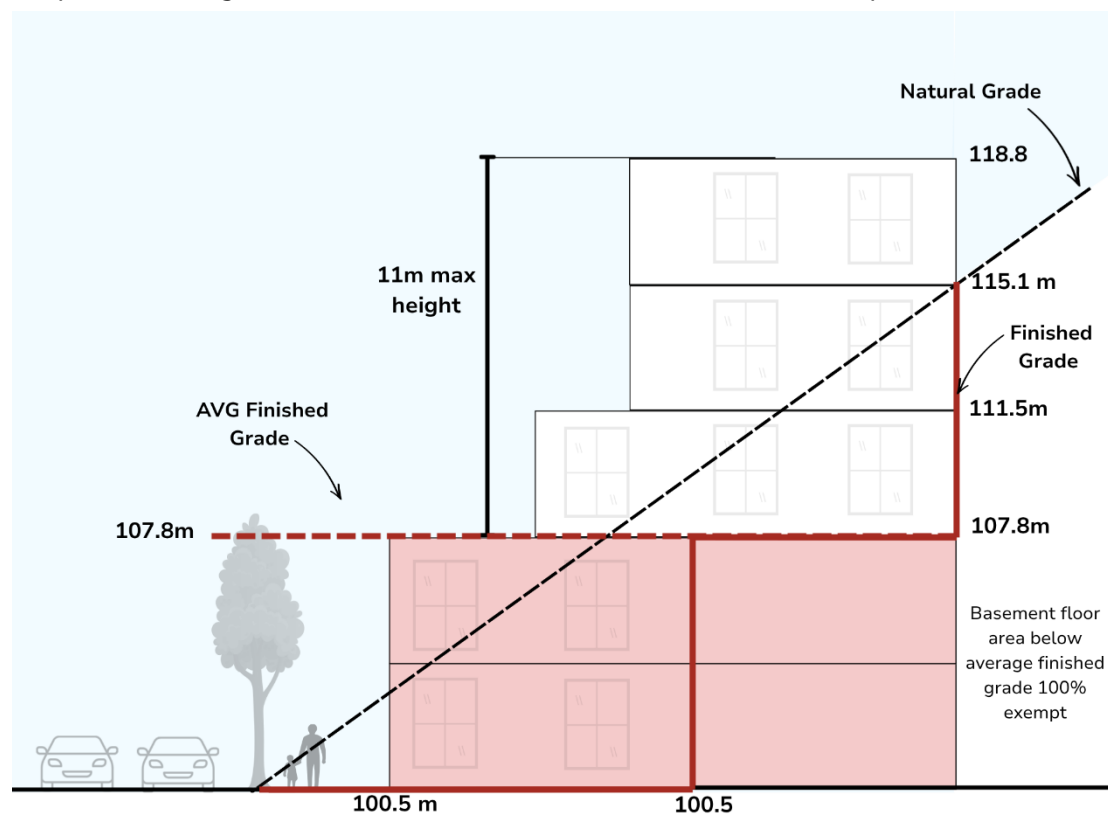


Figure 2. Visual Impact of Basement Exemption – Upslope Lot (Cross Section)

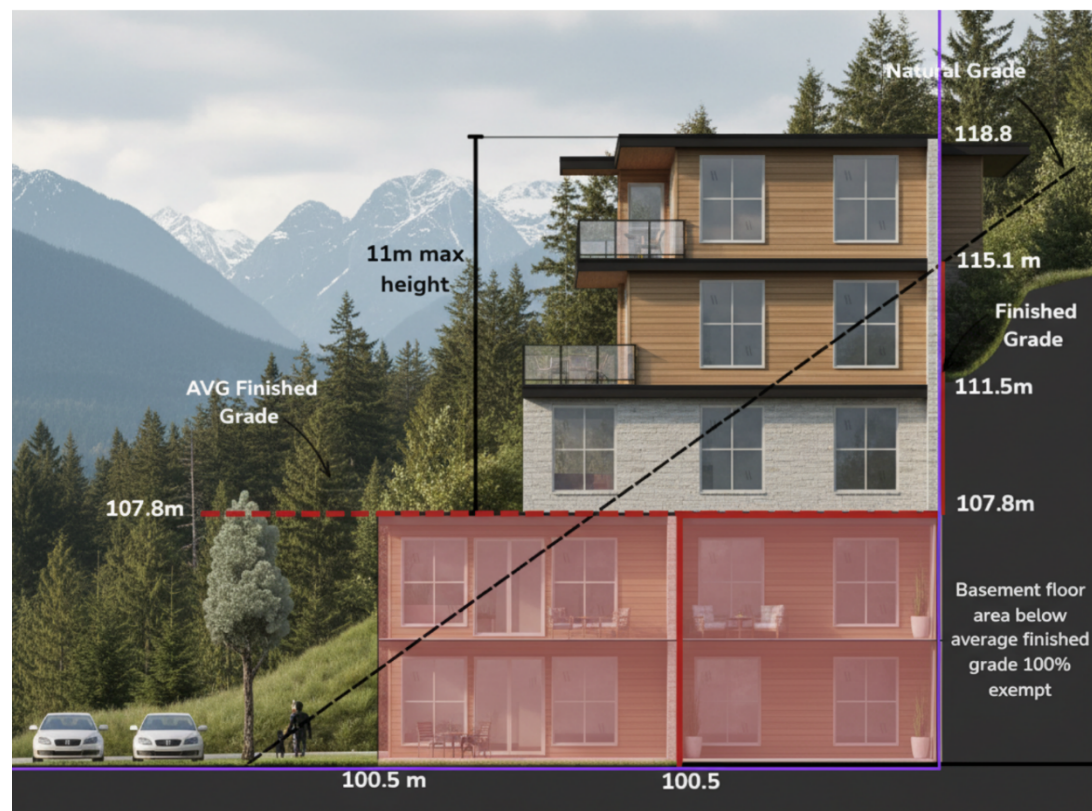


Figure 3. Rendering of Visual Impact of Basement Exemption – Upslope Lot (Cross Section)



Figure 4. Rendering of Visual Impact of Basement Exemption – Upslope Lot (Front Elevation)

The intent of Section 5.25 is to exempt portions of a building from floor area calculations only when those areas are fully or partially buried into the ground and do not contribute to the apparent massing of the building.

To address this discrepancy, staff recommend amending the Zoning Bylaw to explicitly clarify that only one partially exposed basement storey per building may utilize the basement floor area exemption. Staff further recommend establishing a maximum basement storey height to limit the extent to which an exempt basement may project above grade. One example is the basement exemption regulations in West Vancouver, where the top of the floor structure immediately above an exempt basement may be no greater than 2.75 metres above the basement floor.

Building Height Calculations

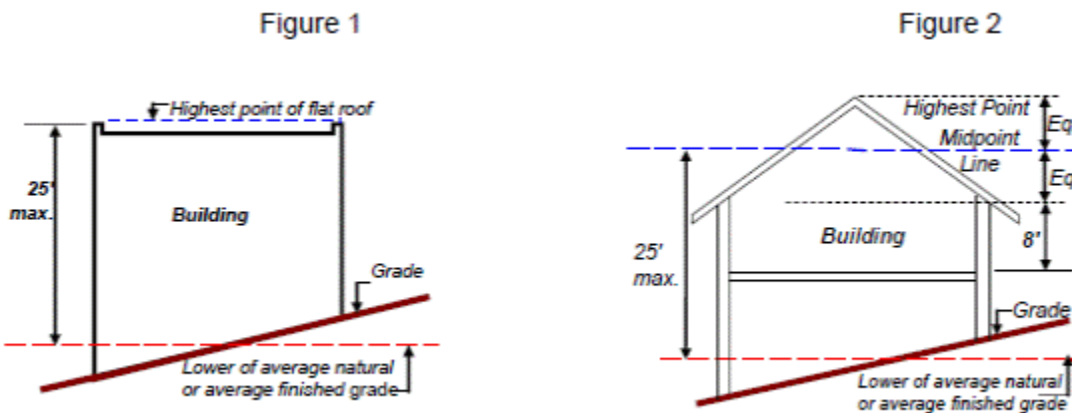
Section 5.5.2 of the Zoning Bylaw requires that “the lower of average natural grade or average finished grade, each calculated separately, will be used in building height and floor area ratio

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calculations”. The intent of this regulation is to ensure the use of a conservative measure of height to prevent site grading to be used to increase the apparent height and massing of a building. Under the current bylaw, the maximum permitted building height for principal buildings is 11 m, which generally accommodates up to three storeys above grade.

Staff have identified a misalignment with section 5.6.1 which states in contradiction to section 5.5.2 that “height is measured from the average natural grade”. This misalignment is made further apparent by Figure 1 and Figure 2 of section 5.6 which support of the intent and current practice of measuring height from the lower of the average natural grade or average finished grade.



For clarity and transparency, staff recommend that section 5.6.1 be amended to read: “Height is measured from the average grade” to bring the section in alignment with section 5.5.2 which is considered standard practice.

Should Council wish to proceed with the amendments as identified in this report, a zoning bylaw amendment will be prepared and brought to Council for consideration in the near future.

Other Options

1. THAT Staff be directed to initiate an amendment to the Zoning Bylaw relating to section 5.25 Basement Exemption and section 5.6 Building and Structure Height as outlined in the June 12th, 2026, Staff report prepared by the Manager of Development Services.

(Recommended)

OR

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2. **THAT** no amendments to the Zoning Bylaw be undertaken at this time.

OR

3. **THAT** Staff proceed with amendments to the Zoning Bylaw with changes as identified by Council: _____

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Communications / Civic Engagement

Should Council wish to proceed with the amendments outlined in this report, a public hearing will be necessary for the general amendments to the Zoning Bylaw.

Corporate Strategic Plan Objectives

The proposed amendment is consistent with the following Council Strategic Plan Goal:

Goal: We unleash the potential for great development that advances the interests of the community. Further limiting the maximum size of residential buildings is consistent with the Objective of “Practice environmental stewardship”.

Attachments:

None.

Report/Recommendation to Council

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2026-06-16 RTC Proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendments (Clarification on Basement Floor Area Exemption).docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	June 11, 2026

This document and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

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