

News Release

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Province Gives Local Government More Tools to Increase Housing

Ministry of Municipal Affairs

VICTORIA - People in B.C. communities will benefit from legislative amendments that give local governments more powers to simplify and speed up their development approvals processes, helping to get the homes people need built faster.

“We are working with local governments, the development sector and housing advocates to streamline local development processes to help get more homes built faster for people,” said Josie Osborne, Minister of Municipal Affairs. “By updating public hearing and certain permit requirements, we are giving local governments more tools to deliver the housing that communities need throughout B.C. This is one important step in the work all orders of government must do to meet housing needs for people in our communities.”

Increasing housing supply is a priority for the Province and these amendments are an important step in that ongoing effort. The amendments will update the Local Government Act to:

- remove the default requirement for local governments to hold public hearings for zoning bylaw amendments that are consistent with the official community plan; and
- enable local governments to delegate decisions on minor development variance permits to staff.

These changes will support local governments to move forward more efficiently on developments, bypassing barriers and speeding up housing approvals. They were identified during consultation with local governments, housing providers and builders, and other stakeholders as part of the Province's Development Approvals Process Review. These changes will also build on the work of the Local Government Development Approvals Program that is providing \$15 million to help local governments create more efficient approvals processes.

"B.C. local governments have been seeking improvements to streamline development approval processes," said Laurey-Anne Roodenburg, president, Union of BC Municipalities. "These amendments to the current legislation provide new options that align with recommendations in UBCM's housing strategy, maintain local government flexibility, and will be welcomed by many UBCM members. We will continue to work with the government to seek further improvements to the development approval process."

To ensure transparency, the proposed amendment for public hearings requires local governments to provide public notice of the rezoning bylaw before the bylaw is considered at first reading by a municipal council or regional district board.

The proposed legislation also makes amendments to streamline the Islands Trust development approvals processes by enabling local trust committees to adopt and amend Development Approval Information bylaws. As well, the Province is proposing changes that will support the City of Powell River's economic development objectives by removing city-owned lots from the designated mill site area to allow for further development of those lands and support community planning.

Quotes:

Anne McMullin, president and CEO, Urban Development Institute –

"Our members have prioritized modernizing and accelerating the municipal approvals process as a key driver to deliver more homes of all types – especially close to rapid transit stations. These initiatives are clearly steps in the right direction and we look forward to continuing our collaboration with Minister Osborne to increase the housing supply across all regions of B.C."

Jill Atkey, CEO, BC Non-profit Housing Association –

"Both of the amendments announced today are positive steps in ensuring that affordable homes can be delivered more quickly. BCNPHA encourages all municipalities to use their new delegation powers and to consider seriously whether public hearings are necessary for affordable housing projects that are consistent with community plans. These actions alone have the potential to save as much as one year in the development process."

Neil Moody, CEO, Canadian Home Builders' Association of British Columbia –

"Streamlining the development approval process and making it more efficient and meaningful to the public are critical changes that our association has been advocating for. We are pleased to see the Province introduce the

first set of recommendations from the Development Approval Process Review today, and believe it will better allow home builders to increase the housing supply we need and create prosperous, vibrant communities"

Learn More:

For more information about the Development Approvals Process Review consultation process, visit:

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/local-governments/planning-land-use/dapr_2019_report.pdf

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