



VIA EMAIL

Ref. 66386

April 10, 2024

His Worship Rob Douglas
Mayor of the District of North Cowichan
Email: mayor@northcowichan.ca

Dear Mayor Rob Douglas:

British Columbia is facing an unprecedented housing shortage. We need every local government in the province to work with us to enable the development of more housing in every community. We need all types of housing; rental housing, family housing, housing that is appropriate and accessible for seniors and housing that presents real opportunities for ownership to first time buyers. That is why in the 2023 fall legislative session, we passed three legislative packages (Bills 44, 46 and 47) designed to shift land use planning away from site-by-site rezoning decisions that slow down the delivery of housing and amenities toward more 'up-front' planning and zoning practices.

Collectively, these legislative changes will help to address the housing crisis in BC by promoting greater diversification of the housing stock to address the unique needs for homes across a variety of demographics, tenures, household lifecycles, and income ranges. They will enable more efficient and predictable planning for housing need, reduce administrative and negotiation costs, help deliver more housing options for a range of incomes, and contribute to economic growth.

In our consultations on the Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing legislation with planning staff and home builders, we heard clearly that this type of housing, four to six units on a single-family lot, can be challenging to realize within overly prescriptive site guidelines. Allowing for maximum flexibility on site will ensure we have the best chance of seeing "gentle" density realized in our communities. And because we know this type of development can be challenging and that streamlined development approvals process will help, Bill 44 also requires that you do not unreasonably restrict or prohibit the development of Small Scale Multi-Unit Housing.

.../2

We also expect many Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Developments will be strata titled and provide more accessible pathways to homeownership for people who would not be able to afford a single-family home in many communities. The Province recommends local governments allow stratification at every opportunity.

Alongside these bills, we also published the [Provincial Policy Manual and Site Standards](#) for Small Scale Multi-Unit Housing. This manual provides a framework that will create a healthy development environment to realize the diverse housing types needed to meet the unit level density required by Bill 44. I would like to remind you that Bill 44 requires that you consider this policy guidance when crafting your zoning bylaw amendments. We strongly encourage you to adopt the provincial site standards around lot coverage, building height and setbacks and to allow as many unit types as possible in as many residential zones as you can so we can build more homes for people.

I know your staff are already working hard to prepare your bylaw amendments to meet the compliance deadline of June 30, 2024, and I appreciate the work and thought that you are putting into this process.

Thank you for working with us to address restrictive zoning and make it easier for people to build small scale, multi-unit homes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ravi Kahlon', with a stylized, flowing script.

Ravi Kahlon
Minister of Housing

pc: Ted Swabey, Chief Administrative Officer (ted.swabey@northcowichan.ca)