



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

FILE: 01-0410-02

August 29, 2024

The Honourable David Eby
Premier and President of Executive Council
Via Email: premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier Eby:

Re: Infrastructure Investment for Complete Communities

During the City of Mission's Regular Council meeting of August 19, 2024, our Council unanimously carried the following resolution:

1. *That the City of Mission write to the Premier to express:*
 - o *Mission's continued support for the creation of affordable and supportive housing;*
 - o *The need for simultaneous provincial investment in schools, healthcare, safety and infrastructure to sustainably accommodate growth; and*
 - o *Mission's intention to review our housing bylaws after one year to ensure that sustainable growth is occurring; and*
2. *That the letter be copied to all UBCM members.*

The City of Mission acknowledges the significant need for affordable housing in our community and across the entire country. We have witnessed the dramatic increase in people living in unsafe and unstable conditions and are acutely aware of the need to accelerate housing production in the marketplace. Further, we are alert to the visible growth in unhoused persons in our midst, demonstrating the need for more supportive housing options in our community.

Because we share the Province's concerns about housing, we have been hard at work at the local level, finding ways to incentivize the development of affordable housing, accessible medical spaces and supportive housing. In the last four years, we have:

- Created a density bonusing program for builders who create below market housing and medical spaces.
- Authorized Mission's first 11-storey building because it offered 100% affordable housing, as well as community kitchen and laundry space.
- Created our *Neighbourhood Engagement Policy* to improve and expedite community engagement.
- Planned the *Stave Heights Neighbourhood* to add multi-family housing for 3800 people (with many units already under construction).
- Added to our Planning and Building Department staffing and made affordable housing applications a top priority.
- Invested in new software and technology to expedite development and building applications.
- Hosted educational Builders' Forums, in partnership with the Fraser Valley Homebuilders Association, to help builders avoid delays.
- Contributed park space to BC Housing for supportive housing and offered more public land to BC Housing and local agencies.
- Approved and implemented an innovative *Community Wellness Plan* in conjunction with every social and healthcare agency in our City.
- Hosted two housing forums to encourage partnership in developing more below-market housing.
- Dedicated approximately 100 acres (1/3) of land in our Waterfront Revitalization Strategy to multi-family housing.
- Adopted a suite of new policies to ensure affordable housing, including an amnesty program to allow registration of unauthorized secondary suites and a bylaw to protect residents of Mobile Home Parks.

We are doing all we can, with even more work in our pipeline, and it is showing in Mission's dramatic growth numbers. I am absolutely confident that other communities across BC are working with the same earnestness and creativity.

The policy and legislation changes brought forward by your government are sure to have a profound effect on our housing supply, but I hope you will agree with Mission when we say that there is much more that needs to be done to ensure that we are creating not just houses, but homes.

In consultations with our advisory committees, local organizations, and community engagement, we continuously hear a series of challenges that we believe will undermine our

shared housing efforts if not addressed. Three solutions have emerged from this work:

1. **Ensure that the Province funds investments in social and physical infrastructure to facilitate growth.** We cannot continue with the existing and long-standing practice of only adding to schools, healthcare, transit, highways, and policing once demand has reached crisis levels. The development community has expressed these same concerns. People need housing in areas where their children can access schools and medical services. Without simultaneous investments in provincial infrastructure, we will create significant inequities at the community level and will force local governments to accept further downloading.
2. **Address parking concerns in communities that have traditional downtowns that are not-yet-fully transit ready.** Across BC, there are many communities like Mission with constrained downtowns. While the obvious solution to the parking issues of these areas is enhanced transit, it must be acknowledged that working residents and parents simply cannot rely on transit as a substitute for cars at this time. While our community has invested in major transit improvements (with more on the way) we cannot anticipate that residents, workers and consumers in that neighbourhood will be able to entirely rely on transit for their daily mobility. Mission strongly supports Transit-Oriented Development. Indeed, it is fundamental to our Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization initiatives, but we have already been told to expect that multiple in-stream applications will now be altered to remove resident parking. Mission has created a parking plan for the area - grounded in a costly analysis - but the government's policy leaves no room for that evidence to come into our planning.
3. **Restore the dexterity that comes with developer-municipality partnerships in master developments.** As you have recently heard from Coquitlam and Burnaby, many master developments rely on place-making to benefit both existing residents and newcomers. Building around shared public spaces is desirable to the private and public sector, facilitating investment and financing, and allowing for a vision that the public can embrace. Density-bonusing, phased development agreements and other negotiated approaches are needed in our toolkit if we are to realize our Waterfront Revitalization. In short, true density and transit-oriented development will be hampered or halted if we are left with the tool of ACCs. As an example, the expected addition of more than 10,000 home in our master-planned Silverdale area would simply not have been possible were it not for our ability to share staffing costs, arrange for future public lands and establish mechanisms for front-ending underground servicing with Polygon. When it comes to large scale projects, we believe the Province needs to create exceptions wherein win-win negotiations are possible.

The City of Mission may not be the largest municipality in the Province, but we pride ourselves on being progressive and resourceful. We have engaged in master planning for our housing future as far back as 1966. While we support the Province's view that affordable housing must be a priority, we believe it will be much more constructive to work in a collaborative fashion, and to see concomitant development by the province of the physical and social infrastructure that defines healthy communities.

Mission has recently adopted our versions of SSMUH and TOA bylaws, and we will adopt revised DCC and ACC legislation soon. In each case, those new bylaws include a one-year review clause. We will be looking to the Provincial government to ensure that there is room for learning, revision and, most importantly, considerable investment in community-level infrastructure.

Allow me to close by saying, Mission is keen to participate in dialogue. If our City can play a role in providing feedback, data or other insights, please do not hesitate to reach us.

Sincerely,



PAUL HORN
MAYOR

Cc. The Honourable Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Housing HOUS.minister@gov.bc.ca
The Honourable Rob Flemming, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Minister.MOTI@gov.bc.ca
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