

July 4, 2022

To: District of Lake Country
10150 Bottom Wood Lake Road
Lake Country, BC, V4V 2M1

From: Canadian Home Builders' Association – Central Okanagan (CHBA – CO)
216 – 1884 Spall Road
Kelowna, BC, V1Y 4R1

Attn: Zara Rockwell – Chief Building Inspector, Jared Kassel – Director of Planning and Development, Mayor James Baker and Council

Re: Increasing Municipal Staff Support for Residents, Builders, and Developers

The Canadian Home Builders' Association – Central Okanagan (CHBA-CO) represents over 300 members of our local residential construction industry: our membership is made up of home builders, renovators, suppliers, designers, and subcontractors from Peachland to Revelstoke. Combined, our members employ over 13,000 residents and contribute over \$1.9 billion dollars to our local economy in new home construction and renovation projects.

We are reaching out today to encourage District of Lake Country (DLC) Council to consider a significant investment in the planning, development, and engineering departments. For over two years, homeowners, builders and developers alike have found themselves frustrated by the process of doing business in Lake Country.

When a project is delayed, significant costs are taken on by Lake Country residents, adding risk and uncertainty where it isn't needed. Housing has never been more unaffordable, with the carrying costs of land and accumulating interest grow month over month. Uncertainty around construction schedules means that builders cannot order materials, leaving them unable to accurately account for rapidly escalating costs on essential construction goods like glass, concrete, and lumber. These costs are eventually passed along to the end homeowner by way of an inflated final sale price.

In other words, the delays currently being caused within City Hall have a direct impact on overall housing affordability within your municipality.

There is good news. DLC staff are aware of these issues and understand that changes need to be made to enhance efficiencies that will provide the building and development communities with more certainty. We are encouraged by a meeting hosted by City Staff on Tuesday June 22

where the building and development communities were able to speak openly about their concerns within the district.

There are tools available to council and city staff to help streamline these processes. The Government of British Columbia has removed the default requirement for local governments to hold public hearings for zoning bylaw amendments that are consistent with the official community plan. Council can also delegate decisions on minor development variance permits to staff.

The Development Approval Review Process, as another example, can help lessen the burden on council even further while empowering qualified staff to make decisions regarding housing. Offloading these decisions to qualified staff would have an immediate impact, as we've seen in other jurisdictions. The CHBA-CO is willing to be an engaged partner on this review process, as we are currently doing in Vernon. In the short term, increasing funding for the addition of staff and tools would allow DLC to catch up on some of the backlog that exists. For this, a Needs Assessment Study should be conducted.

We understand that right now the DLC is currently understaffed and overworked, however we want to ensure that council is aware of the ripple effects inaction will have – increased housing costs and development at a higher cost. This will lead to sustained unaffordability in the District of Lake Country. We are in support of any changes to improve timelines and enhance certainty for the building and development community and can be a consultative partner in the process of these enhancements.

We look forward to a response as to how we can work together to enhance builder and developer services in the District of Lake Country.

Thank you,



Daniel Winer
Executive Officer



Darren Witt
President