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Housing Reports Reveal Development Challenges

Municipal Housing Needs Reports, required by the BC govt, reveal a trend of mostly slow development processes undermining new supply and driving up costs, with a few exceptions such as Langford.

First, the good news. Langford's report says: "Langford's strong working relationship with developers in creating communities is seen as a strength and could be worth replicating or exploring in other communities."

On the other hand, Saanich's report says: "Stakeholders noted that housing starts in Saanich are declining and that high development costs and policy changes do not encourage developers to build in the community."

Oak Bay: "... development approvals are slow and uncertain... Stakeholders involved in non-profit housing report that organizations have avoided working in Oak Bay in the past due to the contentious public engagement environment & difficulty receiving project approvals."

Central Saanich/ Peninsula: "It was noted that it is challenging for developers to navigate three different sets of policies and regulations from the three municipalities on the Peninsula, which, combined with long processing times, make it challenging to develop financially feasible housing projects."

And "Energy step code requirements adopted by Central and North Saanich were also reported to increase cost and create additional challenges to building more affordable housing."

Metchosin: "No primary rental housing units in Metchosin and as such no data was available for the median rent & vacancy rates."

The BC govt has blamed speculators for short supply and rising home prices and ignored challenges created by municipalities.

The province's policy of municipal self-determination often perpetuates costly bureaucracy and neighbourhood protectionism, resulting in high housing costs in most of the CRD.

Solutions are found in the Housing Needs Reports, provided the BC govt is prepared to act.

Next week: Fast Growing Canada Needs Housing Supply

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