

New Councils Need Housing Development Education



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Housing Minister David Eby is trying to convince municipal councils to rezone for housing density and improve permit efficiency in the interests of affordability.

Some municipalities have pushed back, including a recent Union of BC Municipalities report claiming new housing supply is keeping up with our growing population.

Eby says “I don’t understand how this report could be so disconnected from lived reality. We are at a peak of in-migration that we haven’t seen in 30 years.”

The minister is unlikely to take any action until after the municipal elections on October 15th.

However, there is an action that could be taken prior to the election that should receive no objections.

New municipal councils should be required to attend an education seminar, in partnership with the building industry, on housing development including rezoning and costs of construction.

One of the challenges of being a developer and builder is explaining our business model to elected officials and the public.

For example, if the community expects amenities, significant green space, tree preservation and affordable housing, this must be

accommodated in the development business model.

In other words, there must be a way to pay for it.

Additional expenses include Development Cost Charges, building permit fees, provincial Property Transfer Tax, new BC Building Code regulations, and much more.

In addition, Victoria’s land prices are some of the highest in North America. The only way to achieve many municipal expectations is to rezone for higher density or to lower expectations.

The costs of a project must be accommodated by new home purchasers at a price point they can afford. This is true in the manufacture of any product.

Developers and builders working with the province and UBCM, could outline these real-world challenges as well as the importance of affordability, community revitalization and new tax revenue.

Presently, much of this education takes place when developers and builders present their projects at public hearings – a less than ideal environment for education.

Now is the time, prior to municipal elections, to make housing development education mandatory for new councils.



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