



THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF OAK BAY
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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Via email: HMA.Minister@gov.bc.ca
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June 19, 2025

Honourable Ravi Kahlon, MLA
Office of the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs
PO Box 9074 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E9

Dear Minister Kahlon:

Thank you for your letter dated May 21, 2025, and for sharing the content of the Advisor's report both with Council and with the public. Housing continues to be a key priority for the District. As requested, this letter provides feedback on the two proposed directives, as well as other suggestions within the document.

- (1) Delegation of minor variances: Council initiated consideration of several areas of delegation, including minor variances, late last year and expect a staff report back to Council before the end of 2025 to help inform our next steps.
- (2) Parking Facilities Bylaw: the report sets a goal of alignment with "best practices" for multi-unit residential parking. This work is already under way in our Official Community Plan (OCP) and Zoning Bylaw Update project. In practice, the District has demonstrated flexibility in supporting lower parking requirements than the bylaws indicate, for example at 2326 Oak Bay Avenue, Council approved 0.93 stalls per unit. In addition to the OCP work, we have a future project identified to modernize parking and traffic demand management.

We understand your specific interest in receiving updates on two other matters: the OCP update and blasting.

- (1) OCP: I can confirm the Official Community Plan project is focused on facilitating sufficient opportunity to accommodate the 20-year housing needs, as required. The District completed the first round of community engagement in May. Council have instructed staff to manage the project to completion by the end of this year and will be able to provide further details through the Year 2 progress report.
- (2) Blasting: We have recently undertaken consultation with residents and industry on potential changes to blasting regulation, in response to community interest. Currently, the Building Bylaw requires only proof of insurance and a related

Building Permit. These basic requirements remain in place while we examine potential changes. We look forward to providing further updates as this work progresses and will include details in upcoming Progress Reports.

The Advisor also made a range of other recommendations, and I offer the following comments on a few of the items.

- (1) Intake Planner: The concept of an Intake Planner to assist applicants is a worthwhile suggestion. As we have dedicated significant funding already for housing-related initiatives, provincial funding for a role like this would be much appreciated and may be of interest for other communities as well. My request is for the Province to consider funding this position for two years as a pilot, as I agree it would make an excellent addition to the service our staff are already providing.
- (2) University of Victoria Lands: The development potential offered at UVic's "Cedar Hill Corner" land is indeed significant, and I can confirm this site is identified for future housing potential in the Official Community Plan Update project. We also continue to be in conversation with the University regarding this site and support the idea of provincial financial assistance to the University, and possibly the District, to help advance project planning. We see strong potential for partnership here and remain hopeful that opportunities for provincial involvement will emerge as the work progresses.
- (3) Housing on Municipal Lands: With regards to housing options on municipal lands, the District is very interested in including housing where possible. At the same time, the District faces a significant shortage of municipal land for core services such as emergency response services, public works, waste management and administration. While operational space needs are driving current priorities in land-use discussions, we remain committed to evaluating all opportunities with housing in mind.

We are grateful for the Housing Advisor's report and the recognition it brings to Oak Bay's efforts to advance housing options; as the smallest municipality highlighted by the Province, we take pride in the meaningful progress underway. We look forward to continuing to work together with the Province, and with our neighbouring communities, in a spirit of partnership to help achieve our shared goals.

Kind regards,



Kevin Murdoch, Mayor
District of Oak Bay

c. Oak Bay Council
Selina Williams, CAO, District of Oak Bay