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Development Application Process Changes Expedite Housing Approvals

Maple Ridge: Maple Ridge has updated its development application process to get shovels in the ground more quickly for much-needed housing projects.

Last night, Council adopted updated development procedures following an in-depth review of policies and bylaws kicked off this spring, to modernize, streamline and expedite the City's review and approval processes for new development applications, including housing projects. The updated procedures take effect immediately for new projects.

"Housing supply is a challenge across the region, and Maple Ridge is committed to taking the necessary steps to make real progress on both housing supply and affordability in our community," Mayor Dan Ruimy said. "These new procedures will help reduce roadblocks and accelerate the approval of new housing projects to ensure that we're doing our part to support the development community to deliver the quantity and variety of housing needed to meet our community's growing demands now and in the future."

The changes followed several months of review that included research of best practices with feedback sought from industry groups, the Katzie First Nation and the Kwantlen First Nation.

Key changes in the new Development Procedures Amending Bylaw include:

- Requiring a complete application prior to first reading for rezoning applications, including the associated Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment, subdivision, land use permits, and detailed information and technical reports,
- Requiring a pre-application meeting for most development applications, including OCP amendment, rezoning, development variance permits, development permits, subdivisions, and temporary use permits (with some exceptions),
- Reducing the time between third reading and final adoption from 18 to 12 months, with two potential six-month extensions, and
- Allowing for the closure of development applications that have been inactive for six months.

Additional amendments were also made to provide clarity and consistency with other bylaws and current practices.

Complete details and a copy of the new bylaw can be found at mapleridge.ca/342.

Implementing the New Process

The new process will take effect immediately for all new rezoning applications (with or without OCP amendment), and the City will work closely with existing applicants to process their applications as efficiently as possible.

Accommodations for existing applicants will include:

- Giving existing rezoning applicants a year from the date of their first reading to submit their complete applications, and
- Giving existing applicants that have received third reading the ability to apply for a six-month extension after 18 months has passed from the third reading date.

Part of a Broader Focus on Housing

The new bylaw is one of several proactive steps the City has been taking to streamline development processes and encourage new housing, as part of Council's Liveable Community priority for 2023 to 2026.

The City will continue to evaluate and roll out changes to development processes to support Council's Strategic Vision to increase the housing supply in the community.