



THE CORPORATION OF THE
DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

September 15, 2025

Christine Boyle
Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs
PO Box 9074 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E9
Email: Christine.Boyle.MLA@leg.bc.ca

Dear Minister Boyle,

This letter is in response to your letter of July 24, 2025, and its enclosed Directives for West Vancouver. In the attachment we provide a detailed response to the technical issues.

The province's decision to impose mandatory directives is, in our view, an unprecedented and unacceptable intrusion into the fundamental responsibilities of local government. For more than a century, municipalities in British Columbia have held responsibility for local land use decisions, precisely because these decisions shape the very character of our communities. To remove these powers from elected local councils is not only a breach of that tradition, it is a direct erosion of local democracy.

Let me be clear: West Vancouver is not resisting housing. Quite the opposite — we have approved the zoning which in time will create thousands of new homes. This has created award-winning policies to diversify housing and demonstrated a willingness to lead on this issue. Our Council has not rejected a single housing application this term. We have sufficient zoned capacity to meet and exceed provincial targets. The reality is that housing supply is driven as much by market conditions as by zoning. No amount of provincial fiat can change that.

What is at stake here is not whether new housing will be built — it will — but whether local communities will continue to have a meaningful voice in shaping how growth takes place. Residents expect their elected councils to balance growth with livability, infrastructure, and the unique character of each community. That work cannot be replaced by directives issued from Victoria.

Equally important, the Province's directives ignore the most pressing constraint facing our community: transportation. West Vancouver and the North Shore are literally in gridlock for much of the day. This is driven by the rapid growth in the Sea to Sky corridor and the heavy volumes of

people moving through the Horseshoe Bay ferry terminal. Without urgent investment in public transit, additional density only worsens congestion, undermining quality of life and the very housing objectives the Province seeks to advance. If the Province wishes to be a partner in building sustainable communities, then addressing transit and mobility must be at the top of the agenda.

We are deeply concerned that the approach being taken in West Vancouver will set a precedent for municipalities across British Columbia. If the Province can simply override local governments on matters of land use, then no community's planning process is safe. We know that many of our colleagues in other municipalities, regardless of political stripe, share this concern.

Rather than unilateral directives, I urge the Province to adopt a true partnership approach — one that respects the democratic mandate of local councils, recognizes the diversity of our communities, and works collaboratively to meet our shared housing goals. West Vancouver remains committed to planning for housing in a thoughtful and effective way. We ask only that the Province respect the role of local government in doing so — and that it acknowledges the urgent need for transit solutions if new housing is to succeed.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you, not only on behalf of West Vancouver, but as part of a broader conversation with other mayors and councils across the province who are equally committed to housing solutions and equally concerned about this erosion of local responsibility.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. W. Sager". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "W".

Mark Sager
Mayor of West Vancouver

cc: B.C. Municipalities

West Vancouver acknowledges the need for, and is supportive of, new development in our community – as part of thoughtfully planned change that responds to both the input of our residents and the context of our unique neighbourhoods. Secondly, that we have taken, are taking, and will continue to take action on housing.

This action has been guided by our 2018 OCP, the outcome of extensive community engagement, and a document the Provincial Advisor’s report describes as an “excellent official community plan”. Council has been working to implement this OCP. Examples include Local Area Plans (LAPs) for mixed-use centres along Marine Drive and in Horseshoe Bay, places we would encourage you to visit to see the significant development that has taken place; while our work across single-detached neighbourhoods, which established a maximum ownership house size with zoned density “earned back” through the inclusion of rental coach houses, achieved a Planning Institute of British Columbia Gold Award for Excellence in 2022. These kinds of initiatives have delivered new housing. Indeed, had the Province’s Housing Targets commenced one year earlier (in October 2022 versus 2023), the District would have been able to report 568 net new units for the first 12 months which would have exceeded the first and second year cumulative target (462 units).

Council is continuing to implement the OCP. This has been through development applications the OCP enables: this Council has not defeated a single application this term. And this has been through continuing LAP initiatives: this Council has approved an area development plan for over 3,700 mixed tenure housing units in Cypress Village, and the first stream of the Ambleside LAP (the Apartment Area, with a variety of supportive policies for rental, strata, and missing middle housing). These completed initiatives have already led to the formation of a dedicated implementation project team for Cypress Village; and Council direction for a private development application to proceed, in addition to Council rezoning District-owned land, for more housing in Ambleside.

West Vancouver currently has sufficient zoned capacity to meet both the provincially-determined 20-year housing needs and provincially-issued 5-year housing targets. However, in terms of the number of building permit and rezoning applications we receive, the District is restricted by the market. I would encourage you and your staff to review regional and provincial data regarding housing starts, existing unabsorbed new units, days-on-market and sales-to-new-listings ratios for resale units. West Vancouver is not immune from this market downturn. A local example would be a 201 rental unit project, which Council approved, staff processed, and that the applicant chose to let issued permits expire. In this economic climate, West Vancouver continues to advance its planning – which will include the legislated update to the OCP to provide for the additional approximate 900-unit capacity identified in the Housing Needs Report by December 31, 2025 – with the public involvement, staff diligence, and careful Council decision-making that has shaped our community since its inception.

As the incorporated local land use authority, we find the issuance of Directives runs contrary to a more collaborative partnership with the Ministry and have the following specific concerns regarding the three Directives:

Directive 1: Increase Density at Park Royal

A Taylor Way LAP, including Park Royal North, is expected to include financial, transportation, and urban design modeling – as well as community input. However, the Directive is based on defined

densities within a 400-metre radius centred on a cluster of bus stops, without indication given to the actual location, infrastructure, space, timing, or funding of a new transit hub and how this should be integrated with the new development.

Directive 2: Extend Ambleside Apartment Area DPA

The area indicated either already allows for 6-units per lot, or has already been identified for further planning work as part of the Neighbourhood Area (the third stream of the ongoing Ambleside LAP). The focus of this stream will be missing middle forms of housing. These are much-needed forms of housing, which would be made less likely (or impossible) by a Directive for waterfront-adjacent or proximate high-rise apartments.

Directive 3: Approve Proposed Ambleside Centre Local Area Plan

This proposed bylaw, the second stream of the Ambleside LAP, stems from a thorough community process addressing a broad range of issues (commercial revitalization, public realm and facilities improvements) in addition to housing. The bylaw has been presented and remains with Council to direct any modifications and consider its adoption, a fundamental prerogative of the elected representatives of West Vancouver.

Our intention is to address the areas identified in the three Directives in a way that respects our tradition of thoughtful planning, community involvement, and Council's local land use decision-making – recognizing that that this takes time beyond the Directives' imposed December 31, 2025 deadline. We continue to invite the Minister to meet with us to foster a better understanding of our initiatives and a more collaborative approach, one which would include the Province committing to move ahead with projects funded (at least in part) by BC Housing, notably Klahanie Court and Inglewood Care Centre.