

NEWS RELEASE

Excessive red tape, high costs in Vancouver stifling new homebuilding

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For immediate release

VANCOUVER—The City of Vancouver is the most heavily regulated municipality in the Lower Mainland for residential development and is stifling new homebuilding, according to a survey of homebuilders released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

The *New Homes and Red Tape in British Columbia: Residential Land-Use Regulation in the Lower Mainland* ranks the City of Vancouver last among 19 of the region’s municipalities when it comes to residential development regulations.

“Increasing housing supply in Vancouver could help lower prices, but unfortunately there are a lot of confusing and costly regulations on the books that deter new homes from being built,” said Kenneth Green, a senior research director at the Fraser Institute and co-author of the study.

According to the red tape ranking, the City of Vancouver has the longest building permit approval times in the Lower Mainland, with an average of 21 months followed by West Vancouver (18.3 months) and Surrey (13.2 months). The City of Langley had the shortest approval times, with typical approvals averaging less than two months.

“Compared to the City of Langley, it takes an average of 19 months longer to receive a building permit in Vancouver—a fact that should worry anyone concerned about high home prices in the city because the added time means extra costs that are ultimately passed on to homebuyers,” Green said.

Vancouver also has the highest level of opposition to new residential development from city council and community groups.

Moreover, the city has the highest costs, on average, to comply with residential development regulations. Estimates show it costs almost \$78,000 for every new unit of housing built, whereas the typical cost of regulatory compliance in Port Moody, New Westminister, Pitt Meadows and the City of Langley is less than \$10,000 per unit.

Even in neighbouring Burnaby, typical compliance costs are approximately \$15,000 per unit of new housing.

“If municipal councils in the Lower Mainland, especially in Vancouver, really want to increase the supply of housing, they should consider more sound regulatory regimes that encourage—not stifle—residential development,” Green said.

Lower Mainland municipalities (least regulated at the top):

- 1 City of Langley
- 2 Pitt Meadows
- 3 New Westminister
- 4 Port Moody
- 5 Port Coquitlam
- 6 Chilliwack
- 7 Delta
- 8 Mission
- 9 Abbotsford
- 10 Burnaby

- 11 Maple Ridge
- 12 District of North Vancouver
- 13 City of North Vancouver
- 14 Coquitlam
- 15 Richmond
- 16 Langley Township
- 17 Surrey
- 18 West Vancouver
- 19 Vancouver

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