

Mar. 8, 2022

City of West Kelowna
2760 Cameron Rd
West Kelowna, BC, V1Z 2T6

Attention: Stirling Scory

Subject: Zoning Bylaw

Dear Stirling:

Thank you for providing UDI Okanagan with the opportunity to submit feedback on the City of West Kelowna's draft Zoning Bylaw amendments.

Affordable and Attainable Housing

While we have not yet had the time to review the City's amended Zoning Bylaw in great detail, we have done a preliminary review and our West Kelowna Liaison Committee had the chance to meet to discuss our feedback. The overarching theme that came out of our discussion was that the old paradigm, upon which this Zoning Bylaw is based, is failing our community when it comes to providing for the basic need of housing. We currently have a housing crisis where there is a large portion of our community that struggles with shelter and a minor portion of our community that has no shelter at all.

We need a new way of thinking in order to address the housing needs of our community going forward. If we simply continue operating according to the status quo, we will only perpetuate the problem. We recognize that this is a complex issue impacting many communities and we invite the City of West Kelowna to take a leadership role in this area.

It is our understanding that at least part of the cause of this housing issue is due to regulatory modelling and tax costing. At any given time, there is land tied up in the bureaucratic process which puts a damper on supply. Currently, we are falling down when it comes to delivering missing middle housing such as townhome projects. It is nearly impossible to deliver a townhouse project where the townhomes sell for less than \$600,000 each when you factor in the costs of infrastructure, DCCs, and the parking, amenity, and other requirements in the Zoning Bylaw.

This is a problem that can be addressed to some degree by reducing or eliminating some of the existing requirements in the Zoning Bylaw and letting market forces dictate instead.

A good model to look to for this is what the City of Edmonton has done. In Edmonton, each single-family lot can have at least two units on it, including carriage homes. This has effectively doubled the population potential of the city. At the same time, the City of Edmonton has eliminated its parking standards so that parking no longer limits the amount of housing that can be put on a site, other than what the market dictates.

Another good example of making bold moves to help meet the housing needs of our community is the RU7 Zone created by the City of Kelowna, which permits versatile infill housing that remains sensitive to surrounding neighbourhoods. The City is currently undergoing its Infill Design Challenge 2.0 to generate ideas for infill housing in new areas of Kelowna's Core.

An example of a recommendation that we would make for the City of West Kelowna to consider relates to the need for greater density in the downtown. Given the lack of urban densification in the Westbank town centre, we recommend significant increases to density in that area as an incentive. If we truly want to see downtown development, density should not be a limiting factor.

Recommendation: UDI Okanagan encourages the City of West Kelowna to review the City of Edmonton's Zoning Bylaw and look for ways to reduce requirements to its parking standards, building heights, FARs, etc. where it makes sense to do so to help encourage the creation of more housing.

Recommendation: We recommend that the City of West Kelowna look at creating something similar to the City of Kelowna's RU7 Zone and Infill Design Challenge for areas of West Kelowna where it makes sense to do so.

Recommendation: We recommend that the City of West Kelowna consider reducing or eliminating density limits in the downtown area.

Amenity Spaces

In Section 2.10 Definitions, Amenity Space is defined as 'an outdoor or indoor area designed and provided for use by all residents of a residential development for cultural, social, or recreational activities where a minimum of 25% of the required space is provided at grade. Parking areas, driveways, and decks and patios intended for individual dwelling units, service areas, storage areas, no-build/no-disturb covenanted areas, and areas within the required minimum siting distances from a front, interior side or exterior side parcel boundary do not constitute amenity space.'

We believe that this definition of amenity space is not flexible enough to account for market dynamics. This creates a disincentive to build balconies or backyards in favour of creating larger, potentially more wasteful amenity spaces. Large amenity spaces can often be infrequently used and the operational expenses to maintain them can raise strata fees and add to the cost of housing.

Recommendation: UDI Okanagan recommends that the City of West Kelowna allow decks, patios, fenced backyards, minimum yards, and covenanted areas to be included in the calculation of amenity space as this would allow flexibility around how best to offer amenity spaces to the intended end-user.

We look forward to having a face-to-face meeting to discuss these items further.

Sincerely,

URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE OKANAGAN CHAPTER

Per: Rick Miller, Chair, City of West Kelowna Municipal Liaison Committee