

August 30, 2021

Mr. Paul Mochrie, City Manager
City of Vancouver
paul.mochrie@vancouver.ca

Ms. Theresa O'Donnell, GM, Planning, Urban Design/Sustainability City of Vancouver
City of Vancouver
theresa.o'donnell@vancouver.ca

Dear Mr. Mochrie and Ms. O'Donnell;

RE: CITY OF VANCOUVER PERMIT CRISIS - IMPACT ON BC'S CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

In recognition of the shared interests of the City of Vancouver and BC's construction industry, I'm writing to support concerns regarding permitting timelines raised by the Homebuilders Association of Vancouver (HAVAN).

BCCA represents the industrial, commercial, and institutional construction industry across the province. We are non-partisan and serve employers of all labour affiliations, seeking solutions to issues that jeopardize the productivity and resilience of BC's construction industry. Our leadership on workforce development and construction delivery, including pre-construction permitting and tendering best practises, is long-established.

The scope and scale of construction in the City of Vancouver, combined with the crisis stage of the city's permitting process, has consequences across construction sectors and geographic regions:

- Skilled workers are facing layoffs as contractors manage project delays and insecurity, which pushes some workers out of the industry, creates negative word-of-mouth for talent acquisition and retention, reduces apprenticeship training engagement and completion, and causes out-flow migration to other regions;
- Owners and employers facing cash flow and other financial challenges as result of continued delays in Vancouver may seek to mitigate those impacts by cutting back on hiring and investment on their operations in other regions;
- Trusted developers may compromise the integrity of their submissions because of the unreliability and inconsistency of the City's permitting process: why invest the time and resources needed if the odds of delay are so great that they outweigh the risks of compromises in compliance? These shortcuts will be felt in the procurement and build phases, impacting costs and timelines, as well as safety, which negatively impacts the reputation and efficiency of our industry;
- Owners and developers are discouraged from investing in new projects.

None of these outcomes are good for the City of Vancouver or the province as a whole.

Given the urgency of the housing situation in BC – heightened by the acute pressures on our essential industry of pandemic and extreme wildfire – it's crucial that industry and government work together to find solutions. Standard business procedures should not be posing such significant challenges.

A shift to digital submission is called for, and I know this point has been made by others.

If BCCA can be of service in regard to short-term operational relief and/or longer term strategy, let me know. Our Standard Practises Committee is respected across industry for it's work in pre-construction management and process, and our BidCentral platform is the largest online marketplace for construction projects in BC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Atchison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chris Atchison, President
BC Construction Association
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Cc: DMIIF Co- Chairs Heather Wood and Roger Yager
Ron Rapp, CEO, HAVAN
Donna Grant, President, VRCA