

Summit shows Penticton on right housing path

(Penticton, BC – April 6, 2023) – As the City of Penticton prepares to review its Official Community Plan with a focus on housing and the provincial government announces new measures to create more supply, the Union of B.C. Municipalities Housing Summit provided an opportunity to gather detailed information on solutions.

“Council has been clear that creating more attainable and affordable housing, particularly for those in the middle class, is a top priority,” says Mayor Julius Bloomfield. “These two days have allowed council and staff the chance to dig deeper into what’s worked in other communities, what hasn’t been as successful and allow us to direct questions to provincial government officials on what we can do together. It’s confirmed that we’re on the right track and has given us insights on refining our plans.”

Mayor Bloomfield, along with Councillors Campbell Watt, Helena Konanz, Amelia Boulton, Ryan Graham and Isaac Gilbert, and two staff members attended the two-day conference which featured speeches from Premier David Eby and Housing Minister Ravi Kahlon.

As well, the City delegation participated in a variety of workshops, including:

- Tackling Homelessness
- Accommodating Rapid Growth
- Indigenous Housing Partnerships and Opportunities
- Densification and Upzoning
- Expediting Development Approvals
- Regulating Short Term Rentals

“The City of Penticton is dealing with many of these issues and are creating solutions that work for Penticton,” says Bloomfield. “It is important, though, not to work in a silo and see what we can learn from other communities that are facing similar challenges and what we can teach others from our successes.”

The mayor notes the planning department is a leader in expediting approvals; that hundreds of units in a variety of sizes are approved or underway, that a review of short term rentals is being conducted, the OCP review will start soon and the North Gateway project is an innovative plan to create the right mix of homes.

“We still need to do more and Premier Eby has been clear the province is going to be a partner in building supply,” says Bloomfield. “We welcome that commitment to creating more housing for the middle class and we look forward to the details, as the time for talk has passed and we need to start building.”

The total estimated cost for the six members of council and two staff to attend is \$10,000.

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