April 27, 2026

Mayor Mark Sager and Members of Council
District of West Vancouver
Via e-mail to:
info@westvancouver.ca

RE: THE LOCAL LEVER COUNCIL STILL CONTROLS — A TEMPORARY DCC REDUCTION

Dear Mayor Sager and Members of Council:

On behalf of the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association (ICBA) and our more than 4,500 member and client companies — many active across the North Shore — we write to urge Council to introduce a temporary Development Cost Charge reduction of at least 25 per cent. With the provincial override of the Ambleside Local Area Plan now in force, DCCs are one of the few housing levers that remain unambiguously in Council's hands.

A Provincial Precedent

Three of British Columbia's largest local-government jurisdictions have now moved on Development Cost Charges. On March 10, 2025, Surrey Council rolled back residential DCCs to 2023 rates, with the freeze holding through May 2027. On April 15, 2026, the Metro Vancouver Regional District Board adopted its "Roll Back and Reduce" alternative for regional DCCs — cutting rates and backfilling from reserves. Six days later, Kelowna Council approved a 25 per cent DCC reduction for a two-year term, following ICBA's April 16 letter. Those decisions reflect an emerging consensus: when development charges begin to suppress construction, councils must act — or accept extended stalls, lost jobs, and lost assessment growth.

The Industry Needs a Bold Signal

What ICBA members are reporting is a crisis. In our recent survey of more than 350 B.C. contractors, 23 per cent reported layoffs already made or planned, with an average of 22.5 per cent of their workforce at risk; for the first time in years, finding work — not workers — is the top challenge. We project B.C. housing starts will fall from 42,200 in 2025 to around 30,000 in 2026, with construction cost inflation up roughly 30 per cent since October 2022 on Statistics Canada's Building Construction Price Index. Softer selling prices are not a tailwind for new supply — they compress the margins homebuilders need to carry construction risk, so a smaller share of projects clears the feasibility hurdle. A "cooler market" means fewer projects that pencil, not more.

Under B.C.'s Housing Supply Act, West Vancouver delivered 58 of 220 units in Year 1 of its provincial target, and on April 7, 2026 the Province overrode Council on Ambleside and Park Royal. The District now files progress reports with the Minister every three months.

Changing the Facts on the Ground

Council can spend three years reporting that nobody is building, or take the step most likely to change the facts underneath the reports. DCCs on a West Vancouver single-family home sit at a level no buyer will absorb in an absent-presale market; projects that penciled at 2021 DCCs do not pencil at 2026 DCCs, and softer North Shore selling prices are further compressing homebuilder margins.

A 25 to 50 per cent reduction is far cheaper than another three years of stalled starts and continued provincial intervention — and it puts West Vancouver back on the map for the federal Build Communities Strong Fund, which flows to municipalities that "substantially reduce" development charges.

The DCC Revenue Math Has Flipped

DCC revenue is a function of rate and volume. In this market, the equation has flipped: when volume collapses, revenue collapses with it — regardless of rate. DCCs cannot be collected on homes that never get built. Every developer running a pro forma in West Vancouver today is calculating whether current DCCs can be absorbed in a market where CBC has reported 2,500 unsold new condominiums sitting across Metro Vancouver — double the prior year — and CMHC warns condominium project postponements and cancellations will extend into 2027 and 2028. For a meaningful share of projects, the answer is no — and those projects are parked, shelved, or moved, taking the DCC, property taxes, amenity contributions, and construction wages with them. A 25 to 50 per cent temporary reduction produces more total DCC revenue than a higher rate applied to a collapsed pipeline.

Our Ask

ICBA respectfully urges Council to: (1) direct staff to review all DCC revenue streams against a realistic 24-month pipeline outlook; and (2) bring forward a temporary DCC reduction of 25 to 50 per cent, in line with the Surrey, Kelowna and Metro Vancouver precedents, for a minimum 24 months.

The construction industry wants to build in West Vancouver. Give us the conditions to do it.

Sincerely,
INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS AND BUSINESSES ASSOCIATION

Chris Gardner
President and CEO