

Home Building in BC

The Canadian Home Builders' Association of British Columbia (CHBA BC) is the leading advocate of the residential construction industry with over 2,300 members across the province.

Our members are builders, renovators, designers, suppliers, and tradespeople involved in every aspect of residential construction. CHBA BC and our members work actively toward improving housing affordability across the province by building more homes.

It is estimated that Canada will need over 2.3 million additional housing units, doubling the current forecast, to restore pre-pandemic housing affordability by 2035¹. This cannot be achieved by the industry without significant supportive policy changes.

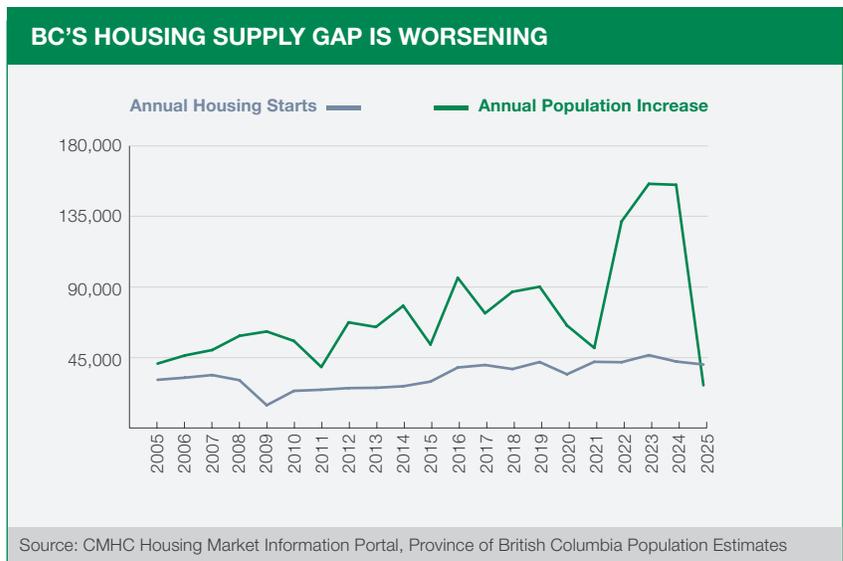
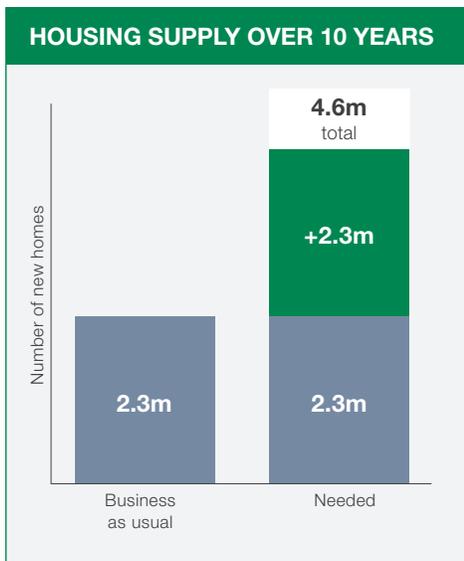
Working together, industry and government can help British Columbians open the door on home ownership.

88% of Canadians under 45 would like to own a home one day. But only 29% of non-homeowners are confident they'll ever be able to buy.

Only 19% of Canadians are satisfied that their provincial government is doing all it can to address affordability for the next generation of homeowners².

¹ CMHC, *Canada's housing supply shortages: moving to a new framework*, 2025

² Abacus Data via CHBA, December 2025



Reducing the Cost to Build Homes

Buying a new home is out of reach for many British Columbians. There are many factors that affect the price of a home, like high interest rates, increasing regulatory complexity, and the above-average rising cost of construction in BC⁴.

Increasing predictability, transparency, and accountability will help make homes more affordable for British Columbians.

A new CMHC report found that development charges increase the market price of new supply, often by more than the amount of the fee itself, and reduce affordability for new homebuyers⁵.

CHBA BC RECOMMENDATIONS

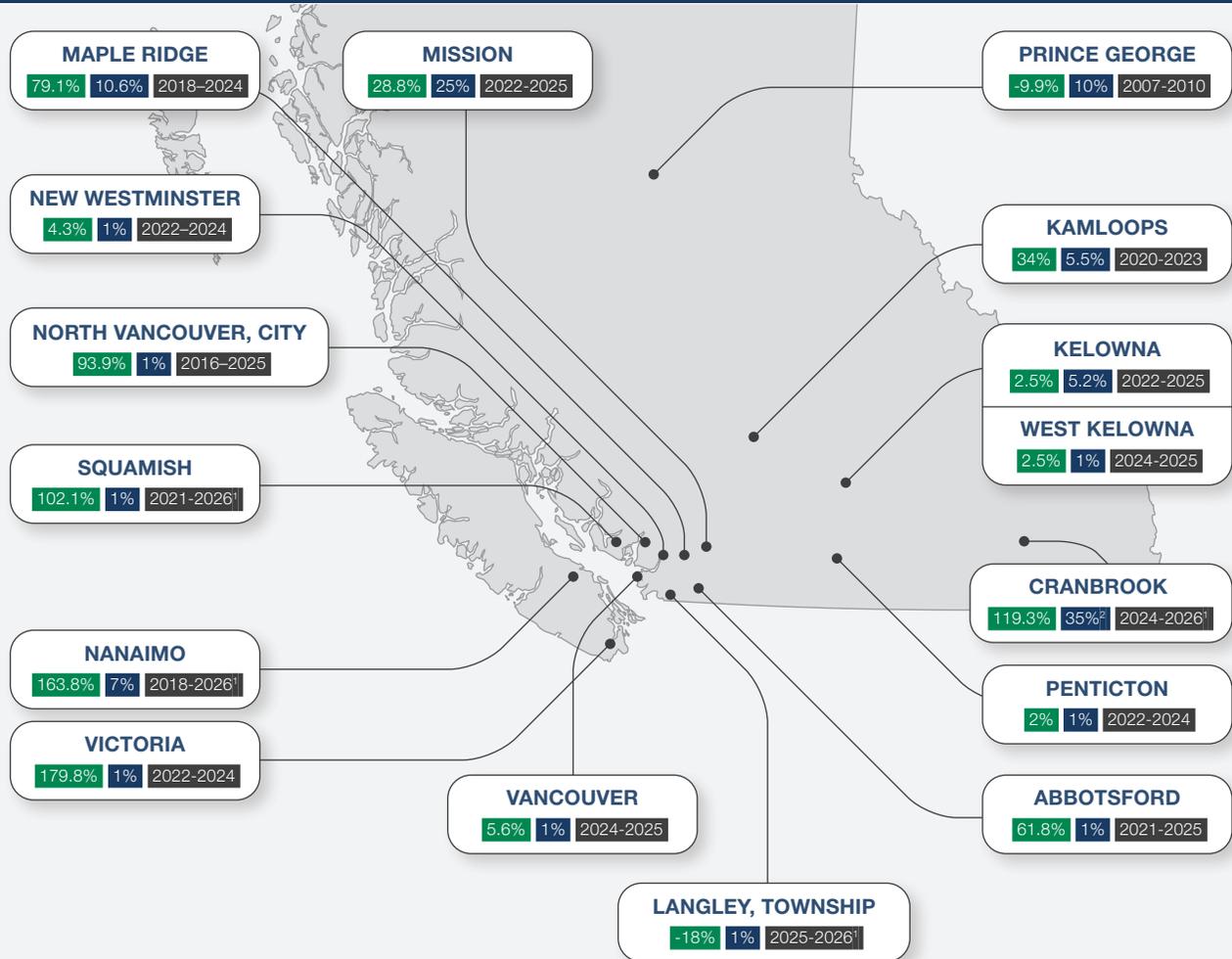
- 1. Expand In-Stream Protections:** Increase the in-stream protection provisions in the *Local Government Act* beyond the 12 months currently legislated to reflect today's project timelines.
- 2. Reform Municipal Infrastructure Funding Model:** Conduct a comprehensive review of BC's municipal infrastructure funding model with the building sector and local governments to better align municipal finance tools with population, economic growth, and housing starts, with the goal of providing long-term, predictable, and adequate funding while reducing over-reliance on development and amenity cost charges.
- 3. Increase Municipal Accountability:** Establish a fair minimum assist factor beyond the 1% currently legislated for local governments on development cost charges (DCCs) and amenity cost charges (ACCs) and require prescribed economic impact assessment methods when local governments update their DCC and ACC programs with oversight/approval from the Inspector of Municipalities.

⁴ Statistics Canada, *Building Construction Price Index (BCPI)*, 2025

⁵ CMHC, *Who Bears the Cost of Growth? A Review on the Price Impacts from Development Charges*, 2025



DCC INCREASES AND UPDATES ACROSS BC



IN-STREAM PROJECTS ARE VULNERABLE

Homebuilders can expect their new projects to spend as much as 26 months in the development application process before a building permit is approved and construction even begins. Vulnerability to legislative and permitting changes can force builders to delay or even cancel new projects. Expanding in-stream protections to align with this 26-month timeline would allow builders more certainty and help address the supply gap. (Source: CHBA BC member survey, 2023)

Legend

Cost Increase (%) Assist Factor (%) Span (years)

Cost Increase = Average Residential Development Cost Increase

Assist Factor = Municipal Assist Factor (most recent – averaged)

¹ calculated based on proposed rates

² phased for 1 year

A Stable, Harmonized Approach to Step Codes

Targeted adjustments to CleanBC actions on the BC Energy Step Code and the Zero Carbon Step Code provide a balanced path to emissions reductions while creating more stable conditions that support housing affordability, enable regional flexibility, and ensure consistent implementation across the province.

Revise Highest Efficiency Equipment Standards (HEES) for 2030. Similar to Provincial action on the zero-emission vehicles framework, greater flexibility on HEES is needed in response to cost pressures and consumer choice for all British Columbians.

Support Market-rate housing incentive programs:

- The City of Vancouver's 19% bonus density for Net Zero or Passive House projects
- Utility rebates for new home construction
- Zoning and Bylaw variances

CHBA BC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Pause Mandatory increases Beyond Step 3 for Part 9 Buildings Under the BC Energy Step Code

- A stable baseline standard gives the residential construction industry time to optimize practices, while enabling market leaders to advance through targeted incentives.
- Voluntary, incentive-based pathways for higher steps should be broadly accessible, enabling provincial and local governments to recognize leadership, support innovation, and encourage higher performance.

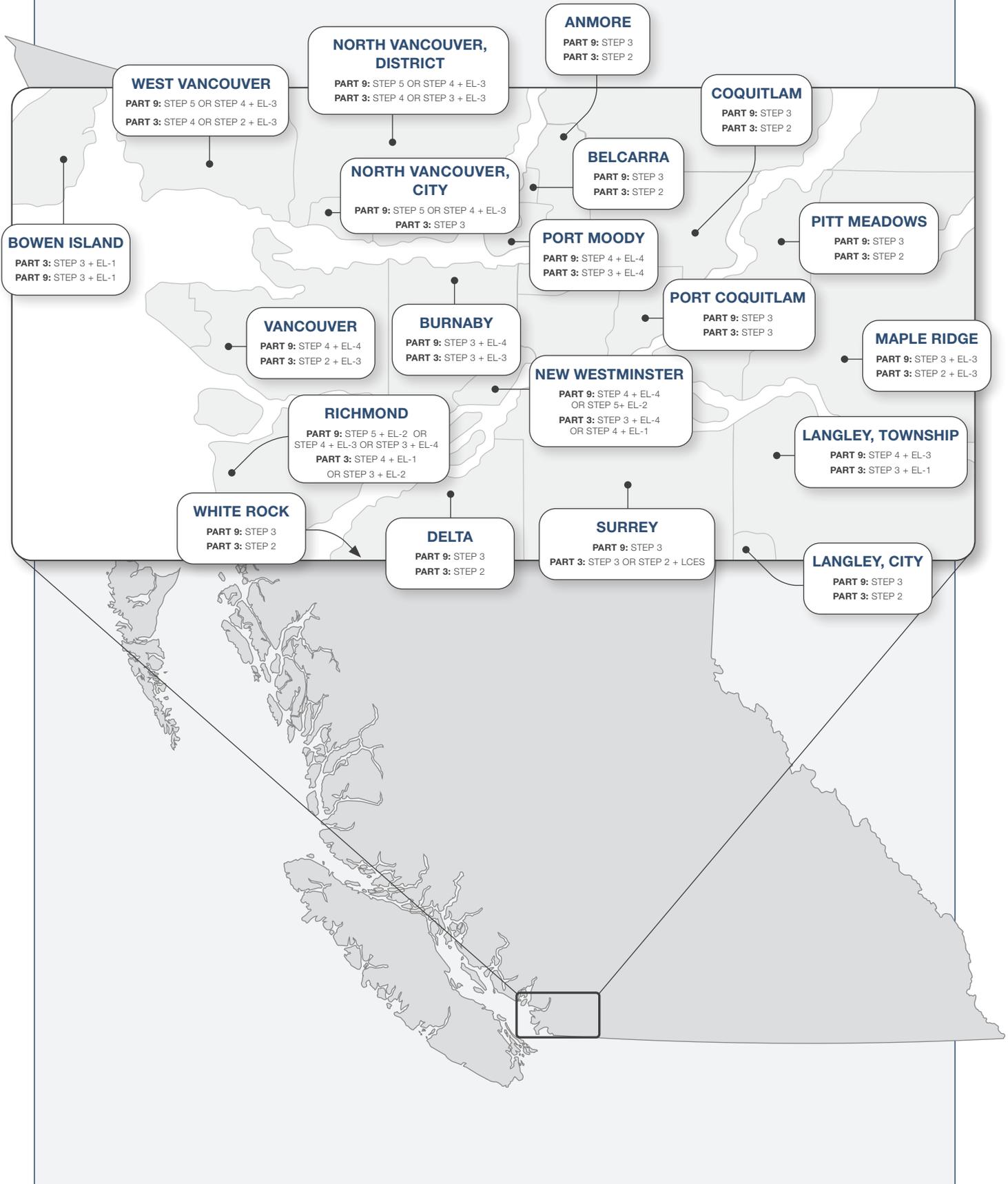
2. Limit the Zero Carbon Step Code to Emissions Level 2 (EL-2) by 2030

- EL-2 achieves meaningful emissions reductions while preserving regional flexibility in harder-to-electrify communities.
- Considerable provincial action is required before advancing beyond EL-2 to reduce upfront cost burdens for customers:
 - Canadian Electrical Code amendments to enable load optimization and energy management systems.
 - Coordination with municipal utility providers and non-integrated areas to modernize electrical distribution extension policies.
 - Streamline utility connection timelines to support timely delivery of all-electric residential construction.

3. Harmonize Regional and Local Government Step Code Timelines and Implementation

- Inconsistent local adoption timelines create uncertainty, increase compliance complexity, and undermine economies of scale.
- Localized grid constraints and limited utility service resources are delaying housing delivery.
- Incentive programs—rather than local government mandates—drive improvements to broader, consistent compliance.

BC STEP CODE IMPLEMENTATION



Streamlining Approvals

Building a new home has twists and turns along the way, but an influx in regulatory complexity and unaddressed permitting redundancies create uncertainty and delays.

Homebuilders and homeowners deserve a clear, predictable, and streamlined process that reduces bottlenecks, minimizes pit-stops, and avoids pitfalls.

CHBA BC RECOMMENDATIONS

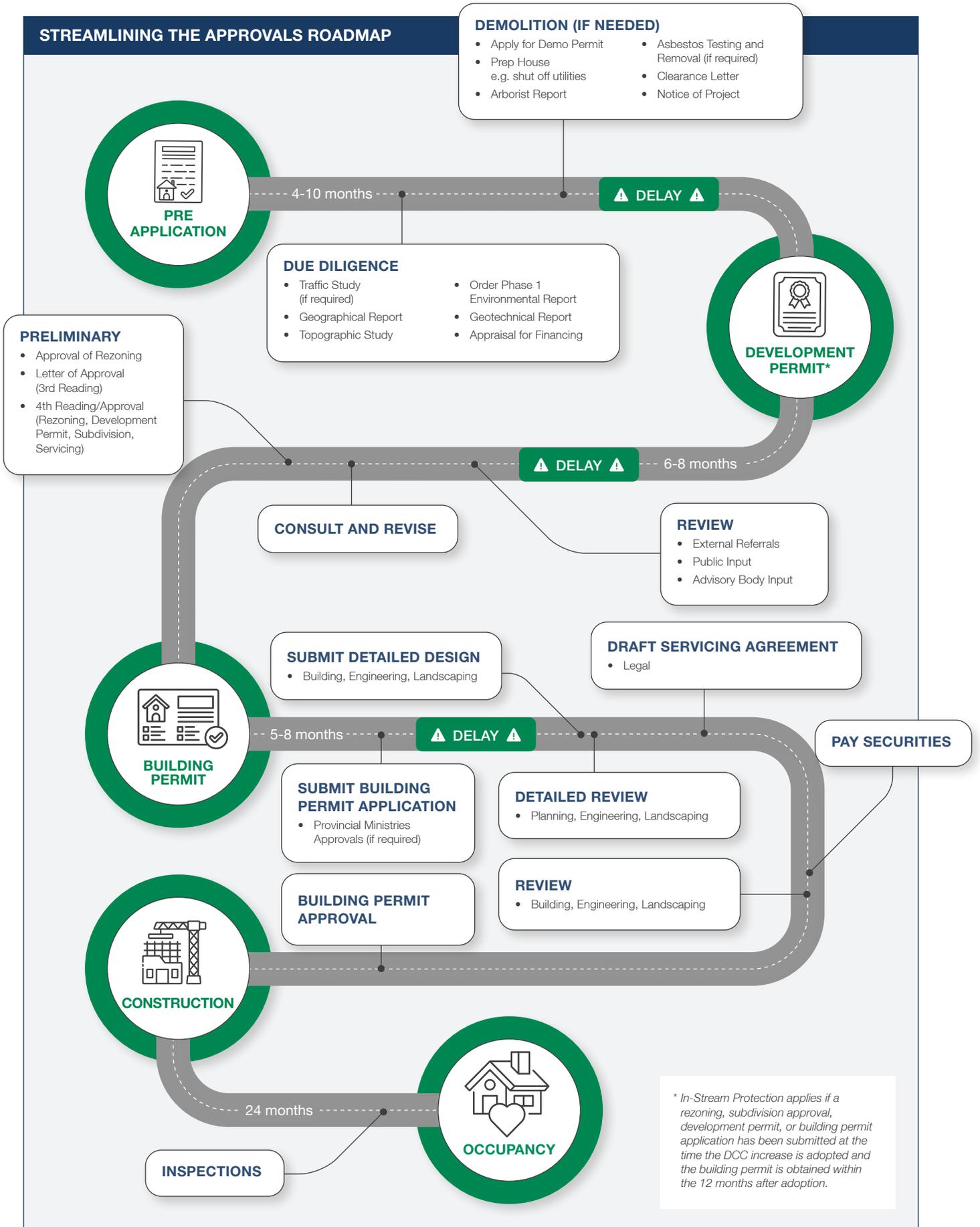
- 1. Moratorium on New Requirements:** Pause introduction and implementation of new requirements for the building sector (e.g., prompt payment, heritage conservation act transformation project, etc.) until the sector has time to recover.
- 2. Greater Reliance on Qualified Professionals:** When submissions are certified by a qualified professional, eliminate or reduce duplicate reviews and sign-offs, while also introducing expedited approval streams for applications completed by a qualified professional in good standing with their regulatory body under the *Professional Governance Act*.
- 3. Improvement of the One-Window Permitting Process:** Ensure further improvements to streamline and process applications quickly are made including, adequate staff capacity to review and process applications, standardized permitting timelines, and continued review of permits across ministries to reduce unnecessary and unclear regulatory/processing requirements.

Review Requirements	
Drawings (General, Site Plan Drawings, Cross Sections, Elevations Drawings, Floor Plans)	
Sealed Engineer's Drawings	Tree Planting/Replacement Plans
Engineered Truss & Beam Layouts and Designs	Character Study
Title Search	Building Design Guidelines
Owner's Authorization	Preliminary Lot Grading
Owner's Acknowledgement Letter	Architectural Plans – Various
Development Approval	Landscape Plans
Water Letter	Proposed Signage
Septic Approval	Environmental Impact Study
BC Energy Code Pre-Build Compliance Reports	Geo-technical Impact study
BC Energy Modelling Summary	Traffic Study
BC Housing Registration	Parking Study
Copy of Title Search	Site Profile
Preliminary Engineering Service and Concepts	Tree Retention Strategy
Arborist Report	Additional Engineering Studies

Approvals
BC Hydro
Health Authority
Technical Safety BC
Fire Department Sign Off
Indigenous Peoples Land Codes
Energy Step Code
National Research Council (NRC)
Building Code

Provincial Ministries Involved
Ministry of Forests
Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
Ministry of Transportation and Transit
Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs
Ministry of Infrastructure
Ministry of Environment
Partnerships with Indigenous Governments

STREAMLINING THE APPROVALS ROADMAP



Summary of Recommendations



Reducing the Cost to Build Homes

- Expand in-stream protections in the *Local Government Act* beyond the 12 months currently legislated to reflect today's project timelines.
- Reform municipal infrastructure funding model to better align municipal finance tools with population, economic growth, and housing starts.
- Increase municipal accountability by establishing a fair minimum assist factor beyond the 1% currently legislated for local governments on development cost charges (DCCs) and amenity cost charges (ACCs).



A Stabilizing Approach to Step Codes

- Pause mandatory increases beyond Step 3 for Part 9 Buildings under the BC Energy Step Code and allow higher steps to remain voluntary and incentive-based.
- Limit the Zero Carbon Step Code to Emissions Level 2 (EL-2) by 2030 to balance meaningful emissions reductions with regional flexibility in harder-to-electrify communities.
- Harmonize regional and local government step code timelines and implementation.



Streamlining Approvals

- Place moratorium on new requirements for the building sector until the sector has time to recover.
- Increase reliance on qualified professionals by eliminating duplicate reviews and sign-offs, while also introducing expedited approval streams for applications completed by a qualified professional.
- Improve the one-window permitting process by ensuring: adequate staff capacity to review and process applications, standardized permitting timelines, and continued review of permits across ministries to reduce unnecessary and unclear regulatory/processing requirements.

Want to Learn More?

If you have any questions, need further information, or wish to discuss these recommendations in more detail, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Policy and Government Relations Team at advocacy@chbabc.org.