

## Do you get frustrated by delays, unexpected obstacles and seemingly endless permit costs?

*Village and Regional District staff all-to-often share these moments of frustration with customers around planning-related permits and Building Permits. Here are some suggestions and considerations that may help you get to the answers you need faster and more cost-effectively.*

1. **Before you purchase property, engage an architect or invest in any significant improvements, consider making an appointment with the Chief Administrative Officer and /or Building Official to discuss your ideas.** *They can give you confidential and informal advice with respect to the processes and costs that may be ahead of you. If you think you'd be upset by being informed that your costly dream property plans just won't work as presented after having purchased land and worked on them for a year or more, please give serious consideration to early consultation with local government.*
2. **Understand what a legal non-conforming property might mean for you when it comes to zoning regulation.** *Customers sometimes believe that legal non-conforming land uses or "grandfathering" means that they can disregard current zoning regulations and OCP policies. This is not true. **Only your existing improvements and uses are grandfathered.** If you think you'd be upset to find out that before you built a deck, extension, garage or shed, you might first need to legally consolidate and perhaps resurvey your entire property, consider informally discussing your plans with the Chief Administrative Officer before submitting an application.*
3. **Development or zoning variance permits are not always granted.** *While they may often seem like an expensive formality, there will be times when an application will be refused for reasons related directly to existing OCP or zoning bylaw content. The better quality of information you provide staff in the first place will enable you to be better informed of any possible permitting challenges.*
4. **Re-zoning can be a significant public process.** *Re-zoning your property is not a matter of filling out a form and sitting back. Staff, Council and the general public all have a role in reviewing your application and Council will ultimately have the final say. There may not be a zone category in the bylaw that fits your plans. If your plans require wholesale changes to zoning regulations, you must be prepared to discuss the benefits of your proposals with both Council and the general public. This will require time and effort on your part without a guarantee of success. Purchasing property on the assumption that Council will approve the change of use you require is not a good plan, for example.*
5. **Be cognisant that you are working with two local governments.** *Building regulation services are provided by the Regional District of Central Kootenay. Planning services are provided by the Village of Nakusp. The Village does not direct the RDCK Building Official and the RDCK Development Services Department does not manage or interpret the Village's planning controls. Consider requesting joint meetings with the Chief Administrative Officer and Building Official if you feel that clearer feedback is required. Avoid "he said/ she said" phone or e-mail tag between Village and RDCK officials in the hope of obtaining a solution to a perceived problem. Schedule a meeting with both officials, perhaps on-site.*
6. **When subdividing property, consult with the Approving Officer at the earliest stages of your plans.** *Work at an early stage with the Village's Approving Officer and your own qualified professionals to outline your concept **and** assess what your likely costs will be. Surveyed drawings and detailed specifications are typically required at an early stage for review and consideration. Depending on the scale and nature of the subdivision, you could be required to undertake a number of commitments at your own expense. It is important to be prepared for that and perhaps have some contingency funds budgeted.*
7. **Past practices, fee schedules and approaches are often amended, repealed or replaced.** *It is the job of local government staff to interpret and apply the bylaws and policies currently in force. As the customer or proponent, staff will offer every assistance in providing up to date bylaws and policies. If you base your plans around assumptions of how things went for a neighbour or friend a decade earlier, there is a risk of things not working out as planned or budgeted. Make some inquiries before applying.*