

Motion **SRD 947/23**, which received the November 3, 2023, correspondence from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), officially brought the **sweeping provincial housing mandates (Bill 44)** into the Strathcona Regional District's (SRD) legislative pipeline. This legislation represents a paradigm shift in how local governments manage density and public consultation, serving as a primary technical driver for your **"Forward or Backward"** campaign narrative in the **October 17, 2026 election** .

The Mandates of Bill 44: Small-Scale Multi-Unit (SSMU) Housing

The correspondence detailed mandatory changes to local zoning bylaws that bypass traditional low-density restrictions :

- **Secondary Suites:** Local governments must permit at least one secondary suite or accessory dwelling unit (ADU) in all single-family residential zones.
- **Multi-Unit Minimums:** For municipalities over 5,000 people within urban containment boundaries, zoning must be updated to permit **triplexes and townhomes** on lots currently zoned for single-family or duplex use .
- **Exemptions:** These requirements generally do not apply to parcels larger than 4,050 square metres or land disconnected from community water and sewer services.

Standardized Community Planning and the Public Hearing Ban

The legislation introduced strict new timelines and procedural rules designed to accelerate housing supply:

- **20-Year Horizons:** Housing Needs Reports (HNR) must now use a standardized methodology to estimate housing requirements over a 20-year period.
- **5-Year Mandatory Updates:** Official Community Plans (OCPs) and zoning bylaws must be updated every five years to "pre-zone" for this 20-year supply.
- **The Public Hearing Ban:** Crucially, the legislation **prohibits public hearings** for housing-focused rezonings that are already consistent with an OCP, provided the residential component makes up at least half of the development.

Financial and Infrastructure Challenges (UBCM Perspective)

The UBCM correspondence highlighted significant concerns regarding the administrative and fiscal burden of these changes:

- **Infrastructure Deficits:** UBCM noted that these mandates challenge the principle of **"growth paying for growth,"** potentially worsening local infrastructure deficits as density increases without traditional negotiation tools.
- **Loss of Negotiating Power:** Because tools like infrastructure upgrades were traditionally negotiated during rezoning, the shift to "pre-zoning" removes a key financial lever for local governments.
- **Provincial Support:** While the Province announced **\$51 million** to assist with implementation, UBCM warned that cumulative financial impacts would extend well beyond the initial transition period.

In summary, motion **SRD 947/23** was the starting point for a high-stakes legislative transformation.