

"No community can survive standing still while the world changes around it. For Oak Bay to remain a great place for our children and grandchildren, action is needed now."

 Councillor Kevin Murdoch, Candidate for Oak Bay Mayor

There are significant issues facing Oak Bay today, including:

- *Infrastructure upgrades costing hundreds of millions of dollars*
- *Community development without clear goals or guidelines*

Addressing them requires a thoughtful and coordinated approach.

When you research Council decisions, you find an inconsistent approach to developments: the denial of the Oak Bay Lodge redevelopment, the approval of a larger luxury condo development across the street, followed immediately by the rejection of a smaller condo application. Heritage homes are being demolished instead of repurposed, and "affordable housing" sits in undefined limbo.

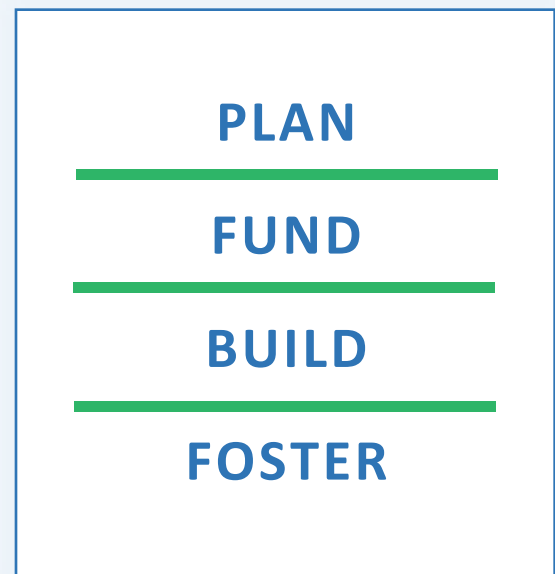
Most of the inconsistencies are symptoms of an unclear community plan that lacks specifics to effectively guide decisions.

The result for the municipality, homeowners, renters, developers, and neighbours is uncertainty, distrust, division, higher costs, and funding shortfalls.

These issues are making it hard for the elderly and young alike. It's time for some thoughtful action, building upon our community legacy, to ensure we leave a viable community for our children.



The following four independent strategies have interconnected and complimentary components to support a single goal: a better future for Oak Bay.



This four-pillar approach, investing in our community's future, forms the foundation of Kevin Murdoch's Mayoral policy platform.

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PLAN: It is time to take the vague wording of the Official Community Plan (OCP), and turn it into clear language that defines the type, location, and size of new housing and commercial options.

A proper **Community Development Plan** (CDP), developed in consultation with residents, will create a path for growth, identifying the location, massing, and regulation of development.

It will address secondary suites, duplexes, townhomes, apartments, commercial buildings and other land use. It will guide transportation and environmental best practices.



It will enable the use of Development Cost Charges (as allowed under the Local Government Act) so larger developments can help fund needed parks, infrastructure improvements, or other community amenities.

FUND: Oak Bay is facing a large unfunded infrastructure deficit worth hundreds of millions of dollars, while total costs to homeowners are already growing at 2 to 5 times inflation. To make smart financial decisions we need to consider budgets in the context of the total financial load of taxes, utilities, sewer, and regional services.



In order to maximize the benefit of all taxes, fees, and regional costs collected by Oak Bay, those costs need to be more transparent and decisions need to:

- *minimize the long term costs to our community*
- *be organized in ways that maximize grant or other partnership opportunities*
- *accurately reflect the total cost increases to residents*
- *ensure money is spent on infrastructure replacement, not emergency repairs*

Small improvements to financing rates, borrowing terms, or project improvements make a large difference when spending hundreds of millions of dollars. To help, the CDP will allow for local improvement payments, prioritized projects, and the ability to access large infrastructure grants from other levels of government.



BUILD: Oak Bay needs to roll out significant infrastructure projects; an intelligent approach to maximize investment is required, and can be broken down into four rules.

1. **Let engineering drive design.** Most wasteful projects get that way from politicians directing engineering decisions. We need to let the experts determine the best solutions based on long term costs and the community plan.
2. **Don't sweat the small stuff.** Staff need the authority and accountability to rapidly and efficiently patch the cracks, potholes and other small issues without overly burdensome process. Meanwhile engineering management needs to focus on strategic projects to drive smart design.
3. **Pay for an "Ounce of Prevention."** Emergency repairs can be orders-of-magnitude more expensive than a planned replacement, so priorities must be set to replace infrastructure where it is most likely to fail, and replace multiple services simultaneously where practical. This prevention model applies to all kinds of infrastructure, including foreshore erosion.
4. **Go Big.** Projects can be implemented in all sizes, but Oak Bay needs to ready infrastructure projects both large and small, to seize on opportunities for larger grants.

FOSTER: Over time, the first three pillars need to be embedded into the corporate culture of Oak Bay. Working with the Chief Administrative officer, this means supporting staff in making independent decisions, establishing clear rules for the development of the community, celebrating initiative, keeping process light, working as a team, and focusing on results.



Everyone from front-line workers to senior staff to Council need to be comfortable assessing data, making the best decision possible, moving forward, and using lessons learned to better inform the next decision.



[Leadership and Stewardship are needed now.](#) A new energy is required to ensure we're building a community as viable for our children and grandchildren as it is for us. It's going to take a lot of hard work and attention to detail to get it right, but the effort is worth it.

For more information visit www.murdoch4mayor.com or email murdoch4mayor@gmail.com.