

FINANCE AND GOVT SERVICES REPORTS ON HOUSING SOLUTIONS



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In June, VRBA gave a housing presentation to BC's Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, which released its report last week.

Our recommendations to the committee included capping municipal fees and regulations on new housing. While rezoning is an important solution, municipalities are implementing costs and regulations to negate improvement.

The Globe and Mail Editorial Board recently cited Victoria's missing middle policy as an example - "the city then piled on numerous rules, including building height, parking and added costs. It's akin to opening a door and immediately bolting it shut."

The report by the Finance and Government Services committee outlined the need to address these issues such as municipal taxes, fees, and regulations to lower the cost of development" as "stated by the Victoria Residential Builders Association."

The report also says, "Coordinate a housing policy across all levels of government to remove barriers to housing supply..."

This includes "reviewing the First Time Home Buyers program's property transfer tax (PTT) exemption threshold to better reflect current market conditions."

We expressed our concerns about the shortage of skilled trades. The committee report says, "Another solution to the shortage of skilled trades workers, proposed by the Victoria Residential Builders Association was to offer electives in the trades at universities to provide students with a well-rounded education and employable skills."

The committee also encouraged "careers in the trades by engaging stakeholders to break the stigma around skilled trades careers and promoting these professions and by providing permanent funding for the BC Centre for Women in the Trades to create trades liaisons in the public K-12 education system."

We could offer many more housing recommendations, however presentation time is limited, as organizations from throughout the province outline challenges ranging from health care to the environment.

Most importantly, there is a democratic process to deliver real-world housing issues to elected officials and the report publicly reflects those issues and recommended solutions.

It is now up to the government to implement the changes to improve housing in British Columbia.



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