

# HOUSING MINISTER DELIVERS NEW PLAN



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Members of the Victoria Residential Builders Association met with Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Housing last week to exchange views and discuss opportunities to boost supply and affordability.

Members' concerns included a lack of missing middle housing (townhomes, duplexes, etc) and vocal groups derailing housing projects.

The minister demonstrated good understanding of the challenges and presented goals to speed up municipal permit approvals and add density.

This week the province announced Fall legislation to rezone single detached lots to accommodate townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, etc.

They also plan to "streamline and modernize permitting to reduce costs and speed up approvals to get homes built faster."

The government hopes this will be undertaken cooperatively with municipalities but recognizes there will be challenges.

For example, their plan to create a "best practices" for permit approvals will require provincial oversight and enforcement.

There is already a weak "best practices" guide for Development Cost Charges (DCC's) requiring "Fairness and Equity, Accountability, and Certainty."

"Certainty should be built into the DCC process, both in terms of stable charges and orderly construction of infrastructure. Stability of DCC rates will assist the development industry in the planning of their projects."

However, DCC's have been boosted 100% or more by municipalities undermining fairness and certainty. There was no accountability because the contraventions were brought to the attention of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and ignored.

VRBA recommends an enforceable cap on fees and a reasonable deadline for approvals.

Saanich has a new plan to charge up to \$33,000 per townhome unit in Community Amenity Contributions (CAC's). Will the province allow municipalities to continue adding fees to new housing despite no rezoning required under the new legislation?

There are many questions still to be answered.

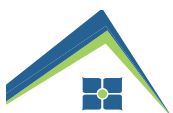
The province also announced a program offering forgivable loans for homeowners creating secondary suites.

Homeowners will be able to access a forgivable loan of 50% of the cost of renovations, up to a maximum of \$40,000 over five years, if they are willing to rent those secondary suites at below market rate for at least five years.

This is a creative way to add rental stock, while helping homeowners with a revenue stream for their mortgages.

The announcement to boost housing offers great opportunity. The minister has delivered on a plan to achieve the goals set out in his presentation to VRBA members.

That said, plans are one thing, execution is everything. VRBA members will assist with any support creating more housing and affordability in BC.



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