

Opportunity to Discuss Housing at AVICC



On April 12, VRBA is participating in the housing panel and trade show at the convention for the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC).

AVICC represents municipalities, regional districts and other local governments of Vancouver Island, Sunshine Coast, qathet/Powell River, the North Coast and the Central Coast.

Our goal is to discuss the challenges and solutions for building new housing including the “missing middle” (townhomes, and small multi-family).

The BC government passed legislation that will allow, in municipalities of more than 5000 people:

- three to four units on single-family or duplex lots, depending on lot size;
- six units on single-family or duplex lots close to transit;
- one secondary suite or laneway home in all communities.

However, there are many issues to address including efficient approval processes, development fees, and site standards such as lot line setbacks and building height.

Simply enabling more density doesn't mean housing will be built. The regulatory requirements must not be so restrictive that the numbers don't work.

This is what happened when the City of Victoria passed a “missing middle” bylaw and they received few applications.

They have since revised their regulations to accommodate a more realistic construction environment.

One of the challenges of being a developer and builder is explaining our business model to elected officials and the public.

While government officials may be well-intentioned, effective housing regulations require the expertise of those in the business of building and selling homes.

For example, if the community expects amenities, green space, tree preservation and housing affordability, this must be accommodated in the development business model.

In other words, there must be a way to pay for it.

The costs of a project must be accommodated by new home purchasers at a price point they can afford, keeping in mind today's higher interest rates and the mortgage stress test.

At the AVICC convention, we will present some of these issues to elected officials, hear their challenges and find some common solutions to boost housing supply and affordability in our communities.

We look forward to the opportunity.

We have advocated for mandatory housing education when councils are first elected.

This would lead to better understanding, more housing supply and affordability.



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