



Norm Verbrugge
President, VRBA

Prioritize Housing Education for Councils

Now that municipal elections have been completed, councils should make education about the housing industry a priority.

Surveys show housing was a main focus for voters across the province. Decisions on new developments should be by informed councillors understanding the market and the impact of delays and rising costs.

This is the first step for addressing supply and affordability.

The BC government is trying to convince municipal councils to rezone for housing density and improve permit efficiency.

This is only possible if councils understand and appreciate how the housing market works.

Industry associations such as the Victoria Residential Builders Association have real-world experience to assist with education on subjects such as rezoning and costs of construction.

One of the challenges of being a developer and builder is explaining a project's business model to elected officials and residents at public hearings.

For example, if the community expects amenities, significant green space, tree preservation and affordable housing, this must be accommodated in the development costs.

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

Additional expenses include Development Cost Charges, building permit fees, Property Transfer Tax, new BC Building Code regulations, and much more.

In addition, Victoria's land prices are some of the highest in North America. The only way to achieve many municipal expectations is to rezone for higher density or to lower expectations.

The costs of a project must accommodate new home buyers at a price point they can afford. This is true in the manufacture of any product.

Developers and builders working with municipal councils could outline these challenges as well as the importance of affordability, community revitalization and new tax revenue.

Public hearings are not an ideal environment for general education about the housing industry and today's market

Now is the time for councillors to make housing knowledge a priority to assist them with responsible decisions for their communities.

Visit us at vrba.ca and careawards.ca

Follow us on
Facebook and Twitter