

MORE MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING OPTIONS FOR BRITISH COLUMBIANS

POLICY PROBLEM

Affordable, appropriate housing is unattainable for too many British Columbians. The average MLS® residential price in March 2023 was over \$961,000, and the supply of listings is low by historical standards.

Single-detached homes are generally the most expensive type of housing in any municipality, with the largest carbon footprints, maintenance costs, and property taxes compared to other housing types. While single-detached homes are important for many families, they are also out of reach for many British Columbian families, particularly for first-time homebuyers. Missing Middle Housing, which describes a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types compatible in scale with single-family homes, can help meet the need of our province's current and future population.

The ability to distribute the high cost of land amongst several housing units improves affordability. Single-detached zoning currently makes up 60-75 per cent of residential zoning designations in BC and assigns the entire cost of one lot to one dwelling unit. Building up to four or six units on a lot will dramatically reduce the land component of each dwelling unit and, therefore, the cost of each unit. Each unit will be significantly smaller, and given the high construction cost in the current market, this will also decrease the unit cost.

Missing Middle Housing can be built quickly compared to large apartment buildings. They can also be developed without the costly and time-consuming land assembly process to achieve minimum site sizes. This type of housing can be built by small contractors using less complex construction techniques.

Opening up more housing options will allow young families to move into neighbourhoods experiencing population stagnation, generating more school enrollment, and providing more support for commercial businesses.



RECOMMENDATION

APPLY ZONING LEGISLATION ACROSS THE PROVINCE

REALTORS® commend large parts of the BC Government's "Homes for People" Action Plan, especially the commitment to introduce legislation allowing up to four units on a traditional single-family detached lot with additional density permitted in areas well-served by transit.

"Land lift" is the increase in property value that occurs when a lot is rezoned to accommodate more units. Bidding wars and speculative land lift can happen when an artificial shortage is created by applying this policy to select areas or municipalities.

By making the government's zoning legislation applicable to all single-detached lots within the province, or at least a given region, there will be no shortage of available developable lots, which should prevent bidding wars.

Housing unattainability is a crisis across the province, including northern and rural communities. Policies providing more attainable homes must be considered across the province, not just in the Lower Mainland and the Capital Regional District. While each community has its unique challenges, providing more housing options for more people is necessary across the province.

BCREA is the professional association for about 26,000 REALTORS® in BC, focusing on provincial issues that impact real estate. Working with the province's eight real estate boards, BCREA provides professional development opportunities, advocacy, economic research, and standard forms to help REALTORS® provide value for their clients.



CONTACT

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