

PERMANENT BRITISH COLUMBIA HOUSING ROUNDTABLE**POLICY PROBLEM**

The BC Government has made some commendable progress by turning its focus on supply-side solutions through the “Homes for People” Action Plan, the *Housing Supply Act*, the creation of a separate Ministry of Housing, new investments in non-market housing, and the establishment of the BC Builds program. While these are important advancements, their implementation will determine their effectiveness.

The current process of development for new housing policy is often inconsistent and ad hoc. There is significant need for a more collaborative, multi-stakeholder process to identify the obstacles to housing attainability and the factors limiting supply across the housing spectrum. Achieving more attainable housing for British Columbians requires a robust and coordinated effort between different levels of government, in close collaboration

with market and non-market housing stakeholders. On-the-ground real estate expertise is underutilized in the policy process.

The lack of a permanent, holistic, coordinated approach to housing attainability has reduced the intended benefits of housing policy and worse, produced unintended negative consequences for consumers that could have been anticipated and avoided with fulsome sector engagement. For example, the *Building and Strata Statutes Amendment Act, 2022*'s removal of only some strata age restrictions has resulted in even fewer opportunities for growing families and first-time homebuyers, as some strata corporations have shifted their age limits to 55-plus. With a housing roundtable, sector input could have anticipated this effect and proposed mitigating suggestions.

RECOMMENDATION

CREATE A PERMANENT HOUSING ROUNDTABLE WITHIN THE NEWLY CREATED MINISTRY OF HOUSING

The provincial government should convene a permanent housing roundtable, bringing together representatives of federal, provincial, municipal, and Indigenous government authorities, along with non-profit housing providers, organizations involved in the financing of homes or closing of home purchases, appraisers, boards of trade, REALTORS®, landlords and rental housing associations. Much of the sectoral policy expertise does not exist solely at the governmental level. Many of these stakeholders are rarely adequately consulted, nor is there a permanently established process for the ongoing sharing of ideas, perspectives and approaches between these groups. Market, non-market, and government representatives are all equally dedicated to creating sound policy for British Columbians to increase supply across the housing continuum. The time has come to establish a better process to harness these collective interests and expertise.

The roundtable's purpose should be to engage British Columbian housing stakeholders and build upon previous examples of well-researched work and effective sectoral consultation conducted by the provincial government. Housing stakeholders are on the frontlines of the housing challenges. They are the primary source of data on housing attainability across the housing spectrum, providing on-the-ground knowledge to identify where and to what degree challenges exist in their community. As such, the roundtable should focus on how best to implement the "Development Approvals Process Review" and the "Canada-British Columbia Expert Panel on the Future of Housing Supply and Affordability" final report recommendations.

While the roundtable should consider increasing access to housing for all British Columbians, it should give special attention to the most at-need groups, such as persons with disabilities, underhoused individuals, and Indigenous communities.

We urge the government to employ the expertise available in the province's housing stakeholders to help guide the creation and implementation of efficient and effective housing policy.

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

For more information, please contact BCREA Senior VP, Policy Research & Advocacy Trevor Hargreaves (thargreaves@bcrea.bc.ca or 604.742.2798).