

Interim Business Property Tax Relief Program

Highlights:

- On Feb 27, 10 Metro Vancouver mayors and UBCM president Maja Tait sent a letter calling on the province to abandon it's Interim Business Property Tax Relief program and bring in their split assessment proposal.
- In May 2019 the mayors' submitted their proposal. By early fall, ministry staff had done a full review, and had determined it was not feasible for 2020.
- Most notably, BC Assessment would have to develop entirely new valuation methodology for properties and individually reassess thousands of properties.

Contrast:

s.13

Page 02 of 50 to/à Page 03 of 50

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Validators:

“We appreciate the provincial government's efforts to address the large commercial-property tax increases threatening many small businesses around B.C., including in the Tri-Cities. The proposed interim measures are a step in the right direction, but we continue to stress the need for the provincial government to develop a comprehensive long-term solution.”

– Michael Hind, CEO, Tri-Cities Chamber

“Vancouver is being emptied out of music and performing art venues, art galleries and artist studios. [...] The cultural sector is in a crisis and the Province’s tax measures are the right step toward halting the closure of art spaces that bring joy and humanity to our democracy.”

– Brian McBay, City of Vancouver Arts and Culture Advisory Committee, Cultural Spaces Committee, ED of 221A

Background:

- The Interim Business Property Tax Relief legislation's basic framework requires a property to be assessed in a commercial class and have at least one tenant responsible for all or a portion of the property taxes.
- Local governments that choose to use the legislation will need to pass a bylaw to set further parameters to identify properties where taxes have increased.
- The deadline for municipalities to pass bylaws has been extended to April 22. They will be provided with staff advice, a model bylaw and a user guide.

Preliminary analysis of MLA Stone's *Assessment Amendment Act 2019*:

- On October 23rd, 2019 Opposition introduced a private member bill called the Assessment (Split Assessment Classification) Amendment Act, 2019, which would create a new commercial property sub-class that local governments can use to provide property tax relief to small businesses.

s.13; s.16

Support for Public Transit

Highlights:

- The Opposition may ask about support for Translink and BC Transit in the COVID-19 recovery.

Contrast:

s.13

Page 07 of 50 to/à Page 08 of 50

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Surrey Skytrain

Highlights:

- The Opposition may ask about media reports claiming the Surrey Skytrain project may be delayed because of COVID-19.
- The business case for the first stage of the project to Fleetwood is currently with the province.
- The cost for the full Surrey-Langley-SkyTrain project estimated at \$3.12 billion, but the business case in front of the Province is limited to \$1.63 billion for the first stage of the project along the Fraser Highway to Fleetwood, while Translink works to secure the remaining funding.
- While B.C. is still reviewing the business case and has not yet received an ask for Phase 3 funding, the cost of both stages of the Surrey Langley Skytrain does appear to fit within the notional funding envelope for South of Fraser rapid transit projects identified in the Mayors' Vision.

Contrast:

s.13

Page 10 of 50 to/à Page 11 of 50

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

114,000 Homes

Highlights:

- The Opposition may ask how government will meet it's target of 114,000 affordable homes. B.C. is on track to meet that goal.

Message:

- We're on track to meet that target.

s.13

Housing Supply – Progress

Highlights:

- The Opposition continues to erroneously claim government is not meeting their targets on housing supply, and that projects are delayed and unfunded.
- On June 8, the Leader of the Opposition sent a letter to the Premier calling for bold action to build more affordable housing in the COVID-19 recovery.
- The Opposition's suggestions include: speeding up development approvals, a one-year suspension of new fees, charges, taxes and amenity contributions, encourage zoning for density, allow landlords to apply directly for the temporary renter supplement, extend property tax reductions and deadlines to housing developments.
- Government is just two years into its ten year housing plan and is on track to meet its target of 114,000 affordable homes.

Contrast:

s.13

Page 14 of 50

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

- Jill Atkey, CEO, BC Non-Profit Housing Association: “We applaud the Government of B.C. for prioritizing affordable housing in the midst of a global pandemic that has demonstrated just how critical housing is to our individual and collective health.”

Page 16 of 50 to/à Page 17 of 50

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Background:

As of Dec. 31, 2019, 23,018 homes are completed, under construction or in the approvals process in communities throughout the province.

Funding Program	Target	Open	Under Construction	Planning Stage	Progress
Supportive Housing (includes Rapid Response to Homelessness, Supportive Housing Fund & Homelessness Action Plan)	4,900	2,135	647	290	3,072
Affordable Rental Housing Program	1,700	109	337	1,169	1,615
Community Housing Fund	14,350	52	913	4,253	5,218
Indigenous Housing Fund	1,750	0	314	851	1,165
Women's Transition Housing Fund	1,500	80	20	579	679
Deeping Affordability Fund	4,900	449	1,202	325	1,976
HousingHub	N/A	741	1,250	811	2,802
Student Housing	8,000	650	2,405	2,529	5,584
Regional Housing First Program	2,010	132	424	351	907
Total	39,110	4,348	7,512	11,158	23,018

Doctor Quotes – Victoria Hotels

Message:

s.13

- Dr. Anne Nguyen works with Cool Aid Community Health Services' Mobile Inner City Outreach team in Victoria serving the hotels in Victoria:
 - "It is a team of 20-some-odd doctors who work in about four full-time positions, working with nurses and a social worker delivering health services in these five motels [in Victoria] and at the Save On Foods arena." *[CBC Radio, July 7, 2020]*

s.13

- Dr. Nguyen said: "My perception is that **there's been a fair bit of stabilization that has occurred in the last few months. So people are accessing health services, including addictions care, mental health services, some primary care.** And yes, absolutely, there is some instability in the housing sites, but overall, actually they're quite calm and we see a positive effect of people indoors."

- “I would say that the current buildings that are up and running are **well staffed** [and...] **well run.**”
- “I hear that many people are glad to be indoors. [...] I'm hearing a lot of [...] **people who are interested in getting better, and now that they are inside and housed, that they can turn some of their attention to that getting better.** So that's really encouraging.”
- “turning towards recovery, improved mental health, improved substance use care is really almost a non-starter [while people are still outside]. But what I hear from folks indoors is that **they're turning in those directions because they have the basic need of housing met.** So I think that what we're hearing is that **housing works, housing first works,** and that we need more of it.”

Page 21 of 50

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Wraparound Supports

Highlights:

- The Opposition continues to claim that supportive housing does not provide wrap-around supports for residents.

Contrast:

s.13

Solution:

s.13

- Dr. Henry has acknowledged that the supports are **working as well**: “We know that as well, the safe housing that has been provided with the appropriate supports for many of the people who have been homeless, who have been in some of the very dangerous encampments, are also working to support people.”[June 11]

s.13

- BC Housing has launched various engagement options for residents and businesses, incl. a Granville Community Dialogue Group w/ representation from:
 - Community members (5)
 - Downtown Vancouver BIA
 - Nonprofit operators: Atira, Lu'ma, Community Builders Group
 - Vancouver Coastal Health (2), Vancouver Police and City of Vancouver
 - Indigenous community representative
 - People with lived experience (2)

- In 2018, the Kamloops North Shore Business Improvement Association said that new supportive modular housing:

“will create the change we seek through the provision of housing options that include **adequate support and wrap-around services** designed to lift affected individuals and families out of poverty.

This announcement is a significant step in **reducing community impacts** from our displaced populations, while allowing for the positive growth and development of our Tranquille corridor." (*Kamloops This Week*, Jan. 17, 2018)

- Bob Hughes, executive director, Spero House:

“Spero House offers hope: hope that once people have a safe place to be, they can focus on their health, wellness and whatever next steps they want and need to take. We are here to help support people get the life they didn’t know they could have. **For many, housing like this is the first step to recovery.**” (Mar 29, 2019)

- The Editorial Board of Kamloops This Week

“amid **what seems like constant criticism from some** regarding the response by the city and senior levels of government to the homeless situation, it should be noted that much has been done and much continues to be done.

[...] the city has seen a tremendous number of homes opened to those who have been homeless. [...] not everything will run perfectly, but **the three supportive-housing initiatives [in Kamloops] are indeed success stories and clear examples of the unprecedented work being done locally to address this chronic social issue.**” (*Jan. 28, 2020*)

Validators:

DEBORAH, Surrey Modular

Deborah moved into Surrey modular housing on June 20, 2018. By Christmas, Deborah was talking about getting sober and moving forward with her life. Deborah transitioned from her home to a detox program in January 2019 and then on to treatment in March 2019. By Fall, she had moved to a sober living facility, Rice Block, and started to apply for jobs. Now, Deborah has 18 months sober and a full time job at Atira Property Management Services. Not only that, but she is happy to report she has her driver's licence back and a car.

Encampments

VICTORIA - You may have heard about James Reedman, 55, who was living in one of the Victoria encampments, and is now enjoying being in a stable indoor place of his own for the first time in 3 years. Today he is appreciating things that most of us take for granted. This is a critical step in long term stability for people like Mr. Reedman and others who have been sleeping rough.

VANCOUVER - You may have seen in the news, the story of Real Morin, 58. Real fell on hard times, and within a couple of months he was homeless and living in Oppenheimer park. Mr. Morin accepted a BC Housing unit, where he is now permanently housed, with a full time job.

You may also have heard the story of TJ and his father, who both accepted housing at the Holiday Inn in Vancouver. TJ spoke about how hard it is to find employment when you don't have stable housing. After 3 years of homelessness, he is also grateful to have a safe and comfortable place indoors. "I slept for probably about two-to-three hours and I woke up feeling amazing — it's like I slept for three days."

Background:

- The services in the Howard Johnson Vancouver include:
 - Staff onsite 24/7 to monitor people going in and out of the building and provide support to residents;
 - Daily meals; Cleaning services; Skills training; Safe consumption space;
 - In addition, a Vancouver Coastal Health nurse regularly visits the building to provide medical care and referral to other health or addiction recovery programs.
- Programs that VCH has in place to support vulnerable community members in the area include:
 - Health services provided by Three Bridges Community Health Centre;
 - City Centre and REACH Urgent and Primary Care Centres;
 - Intensive Housing Outreach Team (a new team designed to support people with complex health needs transitioning into housing);
 - Harm reduction and treatment services as well as access to Providence Health's Rapid Access Addiction Clinic

Supportive Housing Success Metrics

- Reports released in September show that government's supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness is substantially improving the quality of life for residents and reducing their use of emergency health services.
- Led by BC Housing, and in collaboration with the City of Vancouver, the City of Surrey and non-profit housing providers, the reports summarize data collected six months after the first seven modular supportive housing buildings opened in both Vancouver and Surrey.
- With this 'housing first' approach, people experiencing homelessness have access to housing along with the wrap-around services to build a better life.
- Some of the key outcomes include:
 - 94% of residents remain housed in their units after six months
 - 84% of residents report improvements in overall well-being
 - 82% of residents report experiencing positive interactions with neighbours
 - 56% of residents report improvement in their physical health
 - 44% of residents report they had been admitted to hospital less often
 - 44% of residents report improvements to their mental health
 - 39% of residents report improvements to their addictions issues

MLA Stilwell (Budget Estimates, Hansard, April 23, 2018)

“I thank you for coming to the community of Parksville just a few weeks ago to announce the project on Corfield. [...] The Homelessness Task Force, the city of Parksville, the RDN, the town of Qualicum, the SOS and all members have worked hard to make sure that we can get an affordable housing unit in place in our community to support those people who are vulnerable, who are at risk of homelessness.”

“I just wanted to come and ask a few questions to verify for the record and to sort of **dissipate some of the myths that are out there...”**

“The minister has the experience and has the knowledge, with the staff, of other communities that have projects just like this one. **I’m wondering if you can just speak a little bit about the record of the success of those projects, how it has helped individuals in communities around this province and the difference it makes in their lives.”**

“I would agree that we need to hear more of those positive success stories so that people can embrace it more than they currently do instead of fearing the unknown.”

Member for Penticton (Twitter, April 18, 2019):

“Modular housing. Built locally. Relatively fast to build. And soon it will be 62 units of supportive housing for some of Penticton most in need. This will be a staffed facility as well.”

Member Richmond South Centre, re Elmbridge Way project
(Richmond News letter to the editor, April 15, 2018):

MLA Reid: Richmond has glorious opportunity to build housing for the homeless

“Dear Editor,

People with a place to live are not homeless. Homelessness is not something any of us would wish upon our friends and neighbours.

We have an opportunity to deliver homes to people in need in Richmond. All of us need a sense of belonging. We all need a place to lay our heads at night which is safe, dry and sustainable. Poverty is not a crime. Mental illness is not a crime. Escaping domestic violence is not a crime. We can offer a hand up to people who struggle every day.

We have a glorious opportunity to build housing that matters. You could be part of changing a life for the better and perhaps lift up a child or senior in our community. **I believe the heart of a city is measured by how we treat those most vulnerable.**

I believe we can make a concrete difference this year. My thanks to all who will make transitional housing a reality in Richmond.

Linda Reid, MLA

Richmond South Centre”

Businesses & Hotels

Background:

- On July 24, police were called to Paul's Motor Inn following a complaint of a firearm being discharged. It resulted in the evacuation of nearby suites, a shutdown of traffic and a standoff with Crisis Negotiators. The man was eventually taken into custody after police used rubber bullets in the arrest.
- Many of the residents at Paul's Motor Inn were already living there when the Province purchased the building.
- Repairs and improvements are already underway to support the staff in the safe operation of the building, including the installation of a sprinkler system, fire alarms, mechanical upgrades, perimeter fencing, CCTV camera system, façade repairs, replacement of doors for security, replacement of locks, creation of office spaces, and tamper proof lighting fixtures in units.
- BC Housing is also increasing 24/7 security guard coverage at multiple Victoria temporary supportive housing sites, including Paul's Motor Inn, as well as Pandora Ave. There will also be additional roaming guards available as needed to support all hotels.

Contrast:

s.13

Page 31 of 50 to/à Page 32 of 50

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Strata Insurance

Highlights:

- On June 16, the BC Financial Services Authority's (BCFSA) interim report concluded premiums have increased an average of 40% across BC.
- The Opposition is calling for: waiving taxes on insurance premiums; extending the property tax deferral to all owners; & a fund for deferred maintenance.

Contrast:

s.13

Page 34 of 50

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

- The Insurance Bureau of Canada says maintenance is one of the challenges, and the loophole can have significant cost impacts on insurance:
 - “As a result (of this exemption), many stratas have relied on insurance to fill the gaps, leading to an increase in claims and costs.” *[IBC, Feb 2020]*

Page 36 of 50

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

Quotes:

- Chuck Byrne, the executive director of the Insurance Brokers Association of B.C., said the government's changes **"will be critical foundation pieces"**
"These are the first steps necessary to stabilize the strata insurance market in the province." [CP, June 23]
- Tony Gioventu, the executive director of the Condominium Home Owners' Association of B.C., said: "Transparency around reporting, commissions, disclosure, and changes to enhance owner responsibilities in strata corporations will all contribute to an improving insurance market." [The Province, July 2]
"it's a great start" [CKNW June 23]
"I definitely want to resound a high level of support to the government for introducing these amendments." [Media avail, June 23]
"The initiatives that they've taken in this bill are going to have a positive effect for consumers." [CKNW, June 23]
- Aaron Sutherland, Vice-President of the Insurance Bureau of Canada, said:
"Today's reforms are an important first step to help improve strata risk & the affordability and availability of strata insurance over the long term." [Twitter, June 23]

Background:

- The Strata Property Act requires that that all strata corporations obtain and maintain full replacement value property insurance and liability insurance.
- As a first step to address challenges, through amendments to the Strata Property Act and Financial Institutions Act, as well as associated regulatory changes, government's bill will:
 - End the practice of referral fees between insurers or insurance brokers and property managers or other third parties.
 - Set out clear guidelines for what strata corporations are required to insure to help strata councils make informed decisions on their insurance policies.
 - Require strata corporations to inform owners about insurance coverage, provide notice of any policy changes, including increasing deductibles, and allow stratas to use their contingency reserve fund when necessary to pay for unexpected premium increases.
 - Protect strata unit owners against large lawsuits from strata corporations if the owner was legally responsible for a loss or damage, but through no fault of their own.
- The legislation also paves the way for government to make further regulatory changes to:
 - Identify when stratas are not required to get full insurance coverage.
 - Strengthen depreciation reporting requirements, including limiting the ability to use existing loopholes in the legislation to avoid completing depreciation reports.
 - Change the minimum required contributions made by strata unit owners and developers to a strata corporation's contingency reserve fund.
 - Require brokers to disclose the amount of their commission, which has been reported to be at times in excess of 20%.
 - Strengthen notification requirements to strata corporations of changes to insurance coverage and costs, or an intent not to renew.

BC Financial Services Authority's Report

- On June 16, the BC Financial Services Authority (BCFSA) published its interim report into the rising cost of strata insurance in BC and determined the strata insurance market to be 'unhealthy' and "not fulfilling the needs of British Columbians."
- The report found that premiums have risen by approximately 40% across the province in comparison to last year and deductibles increasing by 50% in Metro Vancouver and upwards of 100% in other regions.
- BCFSA's findings indicate many local and global factors are behind these increases.
- These include: methods for determining prices that are focused on size of coverage not cost, recent losses resulting from minor claims for water damage, poor maintenance practices, the use of insurance to 'fill gaps' left by other forms of protection, and a compounding risk of earthquakes in BC.
- The BCFSA used its authority, as the regulator responsible for safeguarding confidence and stability in British Columbia's financial sector, to obtain detailed information from major industry participants for this report.
- At BC's suggestion, insurance was discussed at an interprovincial conference call on condominiums in early November 2019. Provinces reported rising insurance costs and a participant reported that in Toronto, five condominium corporations could not obtain insurance.
- The Ministry of Finance is responsible for the Province's Insurance Act and Financial Institutions Act.
- The BC Financial Services Authority has the responsibility to regulate provincially incorporated insurance companies.

On Victoria supportive housing:

Ross and Shelby, two people living in the Travelodge, spoke to the Times Colonist:

“Since moving into the building, each has received long-overdue medical care from on-site nurses and doctors. Shelby had painful abscesses in her teeth fixed and Ross has been put on anxiety medication [...]

‘We’re not doing illegal activities anymore,’ said Ross, adding that their reliance on street drugs has dramatically reduced. ‘We are absolutely becoming people who are trying to make change in this building.’

Their long-term goal is to get clean, stabilize and perhaps move into a building where they can become the resident caretakers.” (Times Colonist, August 9, 2020)

On supportive housing reducing crime:

From a National Post article on affordable housing and manufacturer Horizon North:

“In Vancouver, they've noticed their modular housing projects have helped contribute to a reduction in crime.

‘Individuals who would typically be sleeping in alleys and might be attracted to crime now have a home,’ says Horizon's president and CEO Rod Graham. ‘Having an address means they can get a job. And there's a multiplier effect with their families.’

‘The only way you're going to build a strong nation is to build people an address so they can move forward.’

He also concedes that his company's projects were only able to be successful in the current environment because of the courage of forward-thinking governments to link arms with private enterprise. Post-COVID, that kind collaboration could prove to be more crucial than ever.” (National Post, August 8, 2020)

On the 60 new homes in Kamloops:

- Even when the old government announced housing – it wasn't going to be affordable for people.
- Last week we announced construction is underway on 60 new affordable rental homes on 5th Avenue in Kamloops.
- And thanks to the extra \$5 million we contributed, rents will be \$300 less than the old government planned.
- We're building housing that's actually affordable for people in their communities, with more than 5,000 homes complete, 9,000 more in active construction, and a further 9,000 moving through the approvals process.

On navigation centres:

Jennifer Friedenbach helped build one of San Francisco's first navigation centres in 2015:

"The navigation centres were developed to get around some of the barriers that traditional shelters present. [...] In a traditional shelter, you have to be in by a certain time and if you're not in, usually you lose your bed. Also, you can't bring all your property in with you [...]"

And I think the other piece about a navigation centre is that **there's a lot more intensive services**. So for folks that have really maybe some more severe behavioral health struggles, they're really designed to serve that population in a way that the traditional shelters don't do as well." (CBC Radio, Aug. 6, 2020)

After years of neglect there's a lot more work to do in B.C. to address homelessness, but Ms. Friedenbach said:

"when I went there [to Vancouver] and visited with all the wonderful programs up there, there was really a much more thoughtful way of access into housing and it was much more point in time and allowing much more community access, where community programs could identify those who are most in need and then directly place them in housing immediately. Whereas here it's a lot of rigamarole. So that also could work really well for a nav centre." (CBC Radio, Aug. 6, 2020)

Housing Starts (July)

Highlights:

- On Aug. 12, CMHC released new housing start numbers. BC's July starts are down 18% compared to July 2019, while those starts across Canada rose 11%.
- Year to date, BC's 2020 starts are down 28% compared to 2019 - the biggest drop in the country.
- However, B.C.'s seasonally adjusted starts (39,978), remain more than 25% above the 10-year average (31,811 from 2010-2019), 49% above the old governments 2001-2016 average (26,850) and 48% above the old government's budget projections for 2020 starts (26,985).

Solution:

s.13

- CMHC also says there is good news to come for renters in Metro Vancouver:
 - “A rising vacancy rate from historical lows is a possibility in the near term, since with recent elevated purpose-built rental starts; there will be an increased supply of rental units coinciding with a fall in demand.” (CMHC, *Summer Housing Market Outlook, June 23, 2020*)

- Even in January, an analyst said: “This is certainly encouraging news for those aspiring towards improved housing affordability. The pipeline of new supply, despite recent turbulence in the market, remains fully stocked.”
 - Steve Saretsky, housing analyst (Jan. 9, 2020)

Background:

Housing Starts: Budgets 2017-2020

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Feb Budget 2017	31,446	41,843	29,977	27,512	26,969	26,985	26,990			
Budget 2018	31,446	41,843	43,664	31,965	30,008	29,467	29,493	29,481		
Budget 2019	31,446	41,843	43,664	40,857	34,015	31,846	30,517	30,519	30,548	
Budget 2020	31,446	41,843	43,664	40,857	44,932	35,021	32,040	30,515	30,518	30,521

Projected decline 28.36% 26.79% 16.75% 22.06%

Projected Starts Sums	2017-2021
Feb Budget 2017	138,433
Budget 2018	164,597
Budget 2019	180,899
Budget 2020	196,514

58,081	More starts in Budget 2020 vs. Feb Budget 2017
42%	Percentage increase

Eviction Ban / Renter Supplement

Highlights:

- The Opposition may ask about individual tenant or landlord questions about the planned end of the ban for evictions for non-payment of rent in the run up to September 1. The BC GEU has criticized the announcement.
- The Opposition has criticized the temporary renter supplement (TRS), calling for landlords to be able to apply, and claiming that the amount is insufficient and criteria too restrictive.

Contrast:

s.13

Page 47 of 50 to/à Page 48 of 50

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.13

- **“....there are supports that are available. There's the federal CERB program. There's the provincial temporary rental supplement program.** Those that can't afford to pay their rent through their own means should be able to cobble together enough to pay their rent.” (CHNL, June 8)

Quotes:

“the federal and provincial monies were very helpful, in that April, May and June were not as bad as I think many of us anticipated in the industry. And the rent supplement program [...] has been extended through the end of August. So in many respects, renters, and I think landlords, sort of weathered out these last three and a half months a little better than we would have expected.”

– David Hutniak, LandlordBC (CKNW, Jul 7, 2020)

“These are hugely challenging times for both renters and landlords frankly. You know, I’m actually very supportive of what the provincial government has done. [...] I think the way they structured it [the temporary renter supplement] is workable and BC Housing is doing a great job to try and administer it.”

– David Hutniak, LandlordBC (webinar, April 24, 2020)