



Backgrounder

Unlocking Supply: Housing Affordability and The Missing Middle

OVERVIEW

- Our region's poor housing affordability is compromising our economic competitiveness.
 - In the [Greater Vancouver Economic Scorecard 2016](#), our region received a "D" grade in housing affordability and was ranked 15th out of 17 comparator regions.
 - High demand for housing, coupled with inadequate volume and a lack of diversity in supply, has resulted in soaring housing prices for homeowners and renters.
 - Physical, legislated, zoning, and cultural constraints create challenges in adding housing supply to the market.
 - Land-use planning and control over regulatory and approval systems puts local governments on the front lines of housing supply. In short, they determine *what* gets built and *where* it gets built.
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WHAT IS THE MISSING MIDDLE?

- The "Missing Middle" refers to three things: a demographic, housing form, and housing tenure.
 - The "Missing Middle" demographic includes new families, middle-income earners, seniors, empty-nesters, etc. who are being pushed out of the market as housing prices grow faster than incomes.
 - The "Missing Middle" housing form refers to types of housing that have a higher density than a single-family detached home, but a lower density than condo towers. For example, this could include townhomes, duplexes, triplexes or fourplexes, and more.
 - The "Missing Middle" tenure refers to a range of ways to acquire housing, including but not limited to rental, community land trust, coop housing, and shared equity.
 - Providing increased access to "Missing Middle" housing for the "Missing Middle" demographic will help improve housing affordability in the region.
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KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

In its new report, [Unlocking Supply: Housing Affordability and The Missing Middle](#), the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade recommends that local governments undertake the following actions to help address the region's housing crisis:

- Prioritize diversity in housing supply when considering applications and use the tools at the disposal of local governments to create a smart regulatory environment that encourages the addition of more supply and greater diversity in housing form and tenure, with a particular focus on the Missing Middle.



- Prioritize the collection of information, in partnership with senior levels of government to identify local market gaps in housing supply and diversity in a regional context and compare timelines for development across the region.
 - Pre-zone for transit-oriented development during the planning process for new rapid transit investments.
 - End the practice of negotiating community amenity contributions on a project-by-project bases or waive or give credits towards community amenity contributions for developments that include purpose-built rental, or other forms of necessary and diverse housing.
 - Use density bonus zoning wherever possible and appropriate to encourage diversity and density.
 - Work to meaningfully reduce development timelines through concurrent permitting for housing types that introduce affordable and diverse housing supply.
 - Explore a region-wide accreditation regime that allows professionals involved in the development industry with proven track record to apply for accreditation and receive access to a fast-tracked process.
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FURTHER READING

- Read the full report [Unlocking Supply: Housing Affordability and The Missing Middle](#).
 - Read the [Greater Vancouver Economic Scorecard 2016](#).
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MEDIA CONTACT

Greg Hoekstra
Communications Manager
Greater Vancouver Board of Trade
604-640-5450 | media@boardoftrade.com