

Burnaby Board of Trade Housing and Homes Principles:

The Burnaby Board of Trade's (BBOT) Housing and Homes Task Force was created through the BBOT's Social Development Committee to help augment the BBOT's engagement with the Mayor's Task Force on Community Housing, of which the BBOT is a member.

The BBOT Task Force was comprised of members representing private business, institutions, and non-profit organizations, and provides feedback and input from a business and social lens to the BBOT on the work of the Mayor's Task Force and on ways to better provide a variety housing options for Burnaby residents.

Through hours of meetings and discussions, the BBOT's Task Force has identified core housing principles which informed the BBOT's participation in the Mayor's Task Force and will underpin future BBOT advocacy on housing issues.

1. Housing for Burnaby's "missing middle" should be prioritized.

The "missing middle" represents Burnaby's working families and those with average incomes (median Burnaby household income is \$64,737) who are impacted by the lack of affordable housing options.¹ This approach focuses on the local workforce who may find themselves ineligible for existing supports but not able to afford housing in the city independently.

Burnaby's "missing middle" needs housing options that are available and applicable to their needs in both form and price. In form, the "missing middle" would represent housing options which are larger than studio/1-bedroom condos but less than detached homes. In price, the "missing middle" would represent housing which is affordable for the income of an average, working Burnaby family through either the market price or with a level subsidization

To support affordability for the "missing middle," home ownership programs, as noted below, should be pursued. In addition, programs aimed at providing light subsidies to middle income earners such as BC Housing's "HousingHub" initiative, should be more aggressively promoted.

2. Add Gentle Density Throughout the City to Increase Supply

To support the "missing middle" of terms of housing form, add gentle density throughout the city to provide supply outside of the major centres. The goal should be to broadly increase the supply of housing in what are currently largely detached-home areas by introducing lower-impact density options such as townhomes, rowhomes, and duplexes/triplexes/multiplexes with the following guidelines:

- Gentle density outside of the major town centres should be encouraged and facilitated by the City with the goal of increasing supply of homes in forms and prices more accessible to missing

¹ The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) defines housing as affordable when a household spends less than 30 per cent of its gross (before-tax) income on acceptable housing.

middle

- Increased gentle density should be focused along existing transit corridors and major thoroughfares, and around Burnaby's post-secondary institutions, but outside of the existing four town centres and SkyTrain station neighbourhoods
- As we expand locations for housing, residential development should not, however, be allowed to encroach upon industrial lands. Industrial lands are an endangered species, and we cannot allow conversion to housing. We would support, and encourage, in-fill housing and gentle density adjacent to industrial lands to support close-to-work housing
- Flexible in-fill density such carriage homes or laneway homes should be allowed in more neighbourhoods to provide less-expensive accommodation, plus as options for seniors to downsize in place

3. Facilitate the Creation of More Complete, Mixed Use Communities

Update community plans to facilitate the creation of more “complete communities” outside of the major town centres and already-defined areas.

These communities should aim to be socio-economically diverse, accessible and age-friendly, and as density is added attention should be given to facilitating and encouraging a more complete mix of land uses including residential, commercial, retail, non-profit/community, recreation, institution and others.

A goal of this action would be to encourage the development of more closely-knit communities, with increased availability of services inside the community to decrease the need for inter-community travel.

4. Increase Internal City of Burnaby Capacity to Accelerate Processing

To facilitate the development and construction of homes across the housing spectrum, the City should aim to accelerate its internal approval and permitting process across the Planning and Building department.

With the number of initiatives and objectives related to housing and overall development at the City, Burnaby should aim to make its development and building approval processes faster and simpler across the board, including both housing and non-housing developments and buildings.

In addition, the City should consider enhancing social planning, citizen services, and parks and recreation attention given to the areas seeing increased density to help create the desired “complete communities.”

5. Support Vulnerable Populations to Access Housing Through Varied Solutions and Partnerships

People with unique experiences or abilities which may present challenges to accessing housing, and those who may face systemic barriers to housing (due to race, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc)

should be supported through a variety of dedicated solutions, such as:

- Adding purpose-built housing for vulnerable populations as part of major City-owned projects such as community centres or libraries
- Facilitating and supporting the redevelopment of under-utilized land owned by non-profit organizations, churches, faith-groups and legions
- Proactively seeking out partnerships with non-profits, other levels of government, post-secondary institutions, and the private sector to develop purpose-built homes for vulnerable populations
- Pursuing and seizing upon funding opportunities from senior levels of government for housing for vulnerable populations

6. Supporting Home Ownership for Middle Incomes

Besides providing supportive housing or rental housing, attention should also be given to facilitating home ownership for the “missing middle” through creative programs to support entrance to the housing market.

The City of Burnaby could support such programs itself, or could support other levels of government in their development. Such programs could take several forms including:

- A shared equity model, whereby a non-profit entity or government program provides funding to help an individual get into the market, but retains an equity share in the property with profit going back into the overall fund (First-Time Home Buyer Incentive, Trillium Housing)
- Ownership covenant model, whereby a restriction is placed on the property’s title offering it for initial private sale at a percentage below market rates and requiring future sales of the home to be at the same percentage discount (Whistler Housing Authority, UniverCity-Verdant)
- Down-payment support models, whereby a government program provides low-interest or no-interest loans to augment a purchaser’s down payment to both allow them entrance into the market and to lower the monthly mortgage carrying costs. The loan would be repayable after a fixed-term or upon sale of the home. (BC HOME Partnership)

Other supportive home ownership options could include “tiny homes” or modular homes, co-housing programs, and co-operative housing developments.

7. Creating a Burnaby Rent Bank

A rent bank is a low-cost, effective way of supporting those precariously housed and preventing further homelessness. The Burnaby Board of Trade and its Housing and Homes Task Force supports the creation of a rent bank to serve the need of Burnaby renters and welcomes any opportunity to engage with or support such a project by the City or an interested non-profit.

However, the Burnaby Board of Trade acknowledges that rent banks are a solution of “last resort” and do not and should not replace implementing adequate housing supports and solutions.