

Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services  
Room 224, Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, B.C.  
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### **Consultation on Budget 2027**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to provide input on the provincial government priorities and funding commitments for the 2027 budget. Below you will find our suggestions for consideration.

#### ***Dedicate Funding for a Full Review of the Strata Property Act in 2027***

Dedicate funding to the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs so that a full review of the *Strata Property Act* and its regulations can be done in 2027. With over 1.5 million people living in strata properties across BC, the time to review the Act is now. Decades old legislation has left key property document delivery slow, expensive, and long overdue for reform. After numerous discussions with the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs, it's clear that they understand the issue, however, need explicit funding and resources to be able to conduct a proper review, as they cannot divert their time and resources from other priorities.

This is not simply an issue of industry convenience, but it's one of consumer protection. A review of the *Strata Property Act* must include topics such as mandating training for strata council, improving access, accuracy, and delivery timelines for strata documents, and establishing a standardized rush fee schedule so consumers know what they are paying before they order, as rush fees can currently cost several times more than the documents themselves. Our industry is not the only group that has expressed concern with the legislation, consumers and strata managers have also expressed their interest in amending the act.

Dedicating funding to conduct a full review of the *Strata Property Act* is money well spent towards improving consumer protection across the province.

#### ***Reverse the PST Expansion for Real Estate Related Sectors***

Reverse the PST expansion for real estate related sectors to realign the policy with the province's goal of housing affordability. We believe that expanding PST to include rental and strata property management, architectural and accounting firms, commercial real estate services, and geoscience services is a punitive tax measure on the real estate industry that will drive up the soft costs of building new housing, increase the cost of transacting commercial properties and have a negative effect on people who currently live in professionally managed housing types.

In a sector that is already dealing with high prices, the PST expansion may further reduce housing affordability and deter additional investment in increasing the housing supply. Ultimately, this may push homeownership further out of reach for first-time buyers and increases costs for renters across the province as these new taxes will eventually be passed on to the consumer.

***Dedicate Additional Funding to the Local Government Development Approvals Program, Creating a Municipal Property Document Modernization Fund***

Provide additional funding to the *Local Government Development Approvals Program* and split the funding stream into two, designating the second as a Municipal Property Document Modernization Fund. The split protects what's already working, while the second stream is purpose-built for property document modernization. The new stream could be paired with a best practices document that highlights the existing work done by municipalities, and how it could be repeated across the province.

In BC, the municipal property document and development processes currently lacks regional standardization and operates more like a patchwork system. Some municipalities have an advanced digital system they've created like Kelowna with its Property Information Request system, while others are still stuck using physical copies, citing a lack of funding as the reason they cannot upgrade. Residents across BC deserve the same level of service regardless of what municipality they live in.

The Union of BC Municipalities already administers the *Local Government Development Approvals Program*, with funding from the Ministry of Housing to much success. Further investment in modernization initiatives can help communities serve their residents better and streamline their internal processes, saving themselves time and resources in the long run through faster turnaround and reduced staff burden. Examples of what we believe should be included are: Standardized electronic payment systems, real-time tracking systems that provide updates to residents, and user-friendly landing pages tailored to important topics such as property information requests or clear guidance on Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act compliance.

A dedicated funding stream for municipalities would make these improvements the standard, and not the exception. The lack of digitization in our property document systems is not simply an industry convenience issue; it's a consumer protection and service delivery issue. Expanding the *Local Government Development Approvals Program* gives municipalities the tools, guidance, and the ability to choose how to best protect their communities.



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Once again, thank you for considering our feedback and suggestions. Should you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to our advocacy department at [danielk@interiorrealtors.com](mailto:danielk@interiorrealtors.com) or at (250) 491-4560 ext. 223

Best Regards,

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