

Urban Development Institute - Victoria Chapter News

Spring 2002



University of Victoria sets Ambitious Goals for the Future

In February 2002, the University of Victoria adopted its new Strategic Plan, *A Vision for the Future*, which drew upon public consultation. The UDI Victoria Chapter welcomed David Turpin, President of the University of Victoria, to discuss the changes coming to UVic.



Over the next 10 years, the University will face enormous challenges including a 40% turnover in faculty and a significant increase in its target population of 18 to 24 year olds in BC. Our province will see dramatically faster growth in this age group than the rest of Canada.

Currently, BC grants fewer degrees per capita than any other province in Canada. David talked about BC's primary resource - our people. "We must provide access to higher education over the next decade to revitalize BC's economy and achieve growth," he explained. "One of the barriers to enrollment is the limited student housing available on campus." The University is looking to a new program to help reduce that barrier.

The new initiative called Project 2004 would see first-year students receiving an offer of a space in residence along with an offer of registration. This ambitious plan will require an investment in

additional student housing, up to 596 beds, and infrastructure. Potential sites for the additional student housing are currently under review and building would proceed in three phases.

Also in the planning stages is a new medical building to support the Island Medical Program 2004. UVic, in partnership with the Island Health Region and UBC, would train medical students for half of their medical training at this new facility. ■

UVic's Strategic Plan is available on-line at: <http://web.uvic.ca/univsec/strategicplan.html>.

Our New Newsletter

Welcome to our new design. Our goal is to provide you with up-to-date information on local news and events. If you have any comments or suggestions for the newsletter please contact David Gerrior, Editor.

This document is best viewed as an Adobe Acrobat file. We would like to be able to send it out as an e-mail attachment to our members and interested parties. In the past, we have faxed the newsletter but in doing so were limited in its style and format.

If you experience any problems with the document, please contact David. We hope you enjoy the new format and look forward to your suggestions for articles and content. ■

David Gerrior, Editor Phone: 658-4836 e-mail: dgerrior@shaw.ca

President's Message



Clearly the concept of a bridge to the Mainland generated a lot of interest at our February luncheon. I'd like to thank Kevin Pytyck of Aecon Engineering for traveling from Calgary to address our luncheon. Our speaker for March is Susan Brice, MLA for Saanich South. She will discuss how the Liberal's New Era policies will affect our local economy. We hope to see you there. As you can see, we have a new format for our quarterly newsletter. I encourage you to participate in making it a success by passing it along to someone who may be interested. You can also submit announcements or information you feel our membership would like to know. ■

Inside this edition

Bridge Builders	2
March 20th Speaker	2
Affordable Housing	3
Zoning Improvements	4
On the Move	4
Bridge Facts	5

Confederation Bridge Builder Generates Huge Interest

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Kevin Pytyck and Victoria Chapter President Art Kool

Over 150 business and community leaders packed the Princess Mary Restaurant to hear Kevin Pytyck of Aecon Engineering talk about the possibility of a bridge to the Mainland. The event drew local and national media attention including an article in the *Times Colonist* and a feature on Shaw TV.

Kevin's presentation focused on the challenges of the Confederation Bridge, how they might apply to the Vancouver Island situation, the anticipated challenges and steps towards a real solution. He began by outlining the process used in designing the Confederation Bridge.

Kevin described the funding proposal, design criteria, public and environmental reviews, construction contract and bridge operating agreement. In speaking directly to the potential for a bridge crossing to the Mainland, Kevin noted the most significant difference between the two projects is the increased depth of the Georgia Strait and, somewhat less importantly, the distance.

"The key consideration is there must be no risk to the taxpayer. The project must be cost certain," Kevin Pytyck.

Aecon is no stranger to large-scale BC projects, which include the Cambie Street Bridge, the first leg of Skytrain and the substructure and Guideway for Skytrain's Millennium Line extension. Aecon was also part of the consortium that built Ontario's highway 407 ETR (Express

Toll Route), the world's first all-electronic, open access toll highway across Greater Toronto. The Confederation Bridge was selected as one of the five most significant Canadian engineering achievements of the 20th century.

Pytyck stressed that public and political dialogue needs to be entered into before any proposal can become a reality for Vancouver Island. He discussed a number of ideas on the potential types of links and possible locations, but the thrust of his presentation stressed the need for careful planning and consultation.

A five-year review of the impact of the bridge to Prince Edward Island raised some interesting facts. The Strait Crossing Proposal was based on 25% growth upon opening. The actual growth exceeded 45% and was realized in the first year and has been relatively consistent. The province of PEI has been among the leaders in growth in recent years and tourism visits have greatly increased. There has been a significant increase in truck traffic, which continues to grow, along with the PEI economy.

More facts on Confederation Bridge are provided on page 5. ■

March 20th Speaker



On Wednesday March 20th Susan Brice, MLA for Saanich South, will address the UDI luncheon at the Princess Mary Restaurant. She will discuss the Liberal's New Era and how the government's policies affect our local community. Susan was elected in the 2001 provincial general election in the constituency of Saanich South. Currently, Susan serves as the Chair of the Government Caucus Committee on Health as well as a member of the Cabinet Committee on Legislative Review. She is also Deputy Chair of the Legislative Select Standing Committee on Health.

To Register

Fax or phone your RSVP to UDI at 383-1072 by March 19th. Members: \$18. Non-Members: \$25. Cancellations by 5p.m. March 18 or we must bill you. ■

Federal and Provincial Governments Sign Affordable Housing Agreement



On December 18 2001 the Governments of Canada and BC announced the signing of an affordable housing agreement which will provide \$177.4 million over the next five years to help increase the supply of affordable housing.

The federal government will provide \$88.7 million matched by a provincial contribution of at least an equal value to enter into partnership to create an affordable housing program. BC was the first province to enter into such an agreement.

This is a significant development since it is the first time the federal government, since 1993, has provided capital funding for the development of additional affordable housing.

George Abbott, the BC Minister responsible for housing, reported that, "This agreement and funding will make our existing social housing programs more sustainable and allow us to meet the housing needs of our most vulnerable citizens. We will explore a longer-term strategy with the federal government to address changes in the tax, regulatory and business environment that will encourage the private sector to build more affordable rental housing."

It is the longer-term strategy that is of particular interest to various provincial and federal organizations involved with housing. The funding allocated (\$177.4 million) under the CMHC/BC Housing Agreement will be largely directed towards the creation of new senior supportive housing developments throughout the province. In addition it is projected that approximately 700 units now frozen under the previous Homes BC

**Contributed by Henry Kamphof, Executive Director
Capital Region Housing Corporation**

program will soon receive approvals to proceed with construction. The funding just mentioned will therefore not be adequate to address the significant low-income family and special-purpose housing needs throughout the province.

Provincial and federal housing organizations will continue to lobby their respective governments to place urgency in the development of a longer-term national and provincial housing strategy supported by appropriate funding to address what has become a "housing crisis" in many areas of Canada.

To date bilateral housing agreements have also been signed with Quebec, Nunavut, and NWT. The remaining six provinces hopefully will be signing their agreements prior to the end of March. ■

Hot off the Press

The announcement of 697 new non-profit housing units was made on March 13th. Details are posted on the media section of the BC Housing web site: <http://www.bchousing.org/>. This announcement involves 21 housing societies for the development of 20 new non-profit housing projects, to be constructed throughout BC. ■

The UDI Newsletter provides a quarterly review of events and news affecting our members. Our thanks to our contributors and supporters for story leads, photographs and articles.

If you would like to provide information for our newsletter, contact David Gerrior, and he will be pleased to help you. He can be reached by phone at 658-4836 or by e-mail at dgerrior@shaw.ca

Contacts for the UDI Executive appear on page 2.

The Newsletter is produced by

Access
Unlimited Consulting
Full Service Public Relations

Do you have an event or meeting you'd like to advertise?

We are happy to advertise our members' special events or meetings, at no charge. All you have to do is contact the newsletter editor and he will be happy to accommodate you. Space is limited in the newsletter so get your information in early to avoid disappointment. ■

Contact: David Gerrior, Editor at 658-4836 or e-mail: dgerrior@shaw.ca



Garry Gilchrist

City of Victoria Considers Zoning Improvements

The Committee of the Whole has forwarded recommendations to Council that will redefine the definitions of “Area” and “Setback”. The proposed revisions will permit and encourage the incorporation of improved exterior wall designs. The recommendations are consistent with those recommended by the “Barrett Commission” and revisions implemented last year in Esquimalt. The proposed definition of area excludes the exterior wall thickness, thus removing a disincentive to incorporate rain screen design principles. The recommendations will also result in all current high tech wall systems being treated equally, as the exterior wall thickness is excluded irrespective of the details of the wall design.

For existing buildings obtaining improved exterior treatments, it is proposed that the new wall face can encroach into the setback area by a maximum of 0.2 meters (about 8 inches). This will allow restoration projects to proceed without the need for Council approval of small setback relaxations. This amendment will facilitate the development approval process.

We strongly support the above amendments and wish to thank the planning staff and Council for their efforts in improving the development approval process and quality of building design. The adoption of the above revisions will be contingent on a successful public hearing; please come out and provide your support.

Infill / Small Lot Development Guidelines

Discussions are currently in progress within both the municipalities of Saanich and Victoria on the topic of infill housing. The City of Victoria has released a detailed “Small Lot House Program: Policy & Design Guidelines” manual. This manual was initially presented to the Committee of the Whole (C/W) on December 6, 2001. The C/W tabled the document subject to review by neighbourhood associations and discussion at a workshop. The workshop, which was undertaken on March 7, 2002, was attended by representatives from both UDI and CHBA.

The City will receive written responses to the guidelines up until March 24, 2002. Your support for this initiative is critical; the progressive aspects of this policy revision will not be enacted without your written and vocal support. A copy of the “Guidelines” can be obtained from the City of Victoria Planning Department.

Saanich is proposing a forum focussing on infill housing for the Fall 2002 to Spring 2003. UDI has responded in favor of undertaking an inclusive review of the multitude of issues involved in this topic.

Watch for further updates on this issue

Garry R. Gilchrist, P. Eng.
Chair, Municipal Liaison



On the Move

Has your company or organization welcomed a new employee? Perhaps you have moved offices? **On the Move** is the place to let people know about personnel changes or other related news. Contact David Gerrior, Newsletter Editor.

CMHC relocates Victoria Office

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has moved from its former location on Gorge Road to 1675 Douglas St. Suite 150 (former Centra Gas premises). The main phone number is 363-8040 and the fax number is 995-2640. ■

Confederation Bridge Facts

- 1. How much did it cost to construct the Confederation Bridge?** The total cost of construction was 850 million dollars.
- 2. How long did it take to build the Confederation Bridge?** Construction of the Confederation Bridge started in the fall of 1993 and was completed in the spring of 1997.
- 3. How many people were employed during the construction of the Confederation Bridge?** The total personnel at peak production was 2079 craft workers and 415 staff. In total, over 5,000 people were employed during the construction phase of the project.
- 4. Is it possible to purchase a seasonal or frequent user pass for the Confederation Bridge?** Discounted passage is not provided on the Confederation Bridge.
- 5. Are there one-way tolls on the Confederation Bridge?** There are no one-way tolls on the Confederation Bridge. For travelers choosing to arrive on PEI by ferry and leave via the Confederation Bridge, you will pay only the bridge toll when you leave PEI via the Bridge.
- 6. Are pedestrians and cyclists permitted on the Confederation Bridge?** Pedestrians and cyclists are not permitted on the Confederation Bridge. The operating company provides a free shuttle service for pedestrians and cyclists which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

More Facts

- The components of the Confederation Bridge were built on land in a 200-acre facility. After the 13 kilometers were connected, the fit was out by about 10 millimeters.
- There are 310 streetlights illuminating the Bridge.
- The Bridge electrical system including the traffic lights, street lights and toll system is supported by an uninterruptable power supply and a back up electrical generator.
- The Bridge's highest point is located at 60 metres above water with the average height being 40 metres.
- Why is the Bridge curved? To ensure drivers remain attentive and reduce the potential for accidents that experts believe happen more often on straight highways or bridges.
- The Bridge surface is a special long lasting bituminous mixture that minimizes vehicle spray during wet weather and allows for effective drainage of rainwater.
- The normal travelling speed on the Bridge is 80 km/h. Vehicles are not permitted to stop on the Bridge, overtake and pass other vehicles.
- Crossing the Bridge structure at the normal travelling speed of 80 km/h takes less than 10 minutes.
- The Bridge has a hollow core interior and acts as a utility corridor for electrical services, telephone, and other utilities to and from the Island.
- A weather monitoring station is located on the Bridge providing real time information on the weather conditions, such as wind speed, wind direction, air temperature, road temperature, humidity, dew point and rate of precipitation.
- The Changeable Message Sign (CMS) located at each end of the Bridge transmits messages to the driver about conditions on the Bridge.

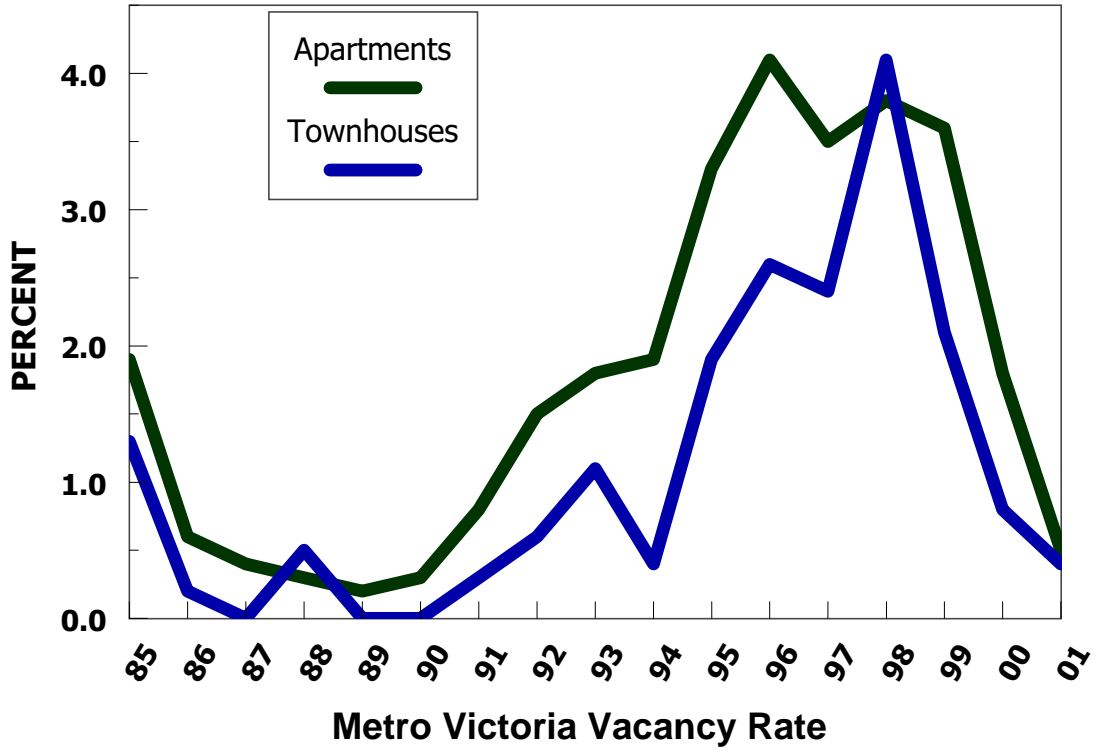
- The 1.1 metre high concrete barriers on the Bridge prevent drivers from seeing directly down over the side of the Bridge as well as acting as a windbreak.
- Speed limits on the Bridge may be adjusted from the normal 80 km/h during certain conditions. Adjusted speed limits are displayed to drivers via the electronic variable speed signs on the Bridge.
- There are 34 traffic signal units on the Bridge – in normal conditions all signals will be green.
- The Bridge Toll Plaza has seven lanes. One lane is equipped to allow self-serve credit or debit card payment for two axle passenger vehicles only.
- The Bridge is 11 metres wide and has a 3.75 metre wide lane for traffic in each direction with a 1.75 metre wide shoulder on each side.

What Does it Cost to Travel the Bridge? (you only pay when you leave PEI)

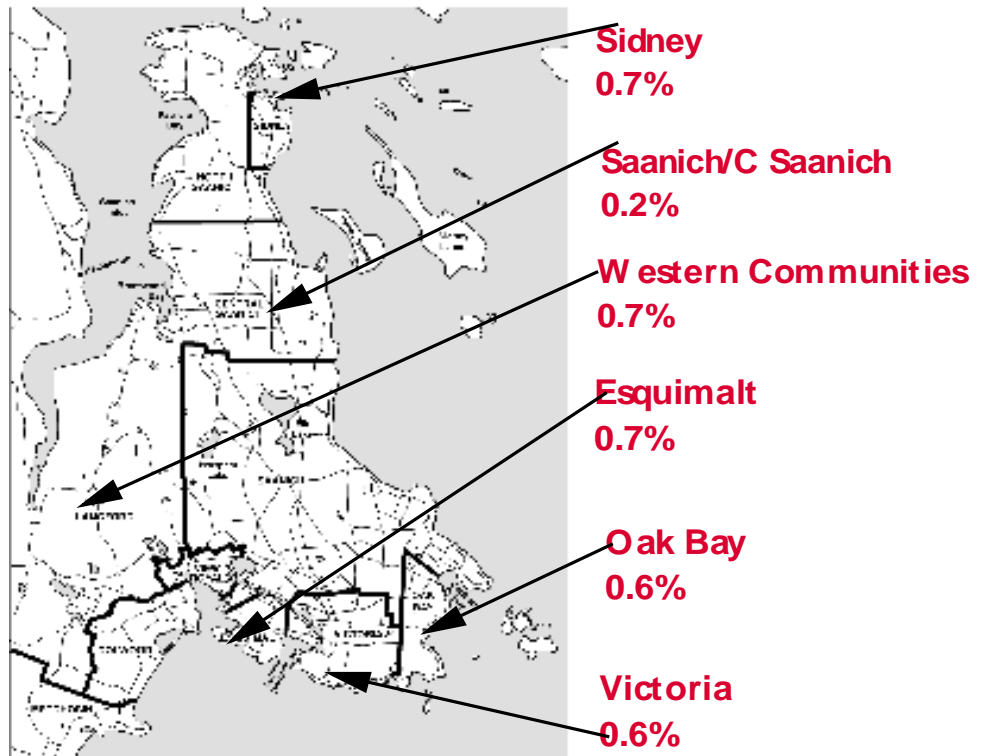
Automobile:	\$ 37.75
Recreation Vehicle:	\$ 43.00
Motorcycle:	\$ 15.00
Truck:	\$ 43.00
Tractor Trailer:	\$ 54.00
Bus:	\$ 215.50

The following information on local market conditions is provided by the Victoria office of CMHC

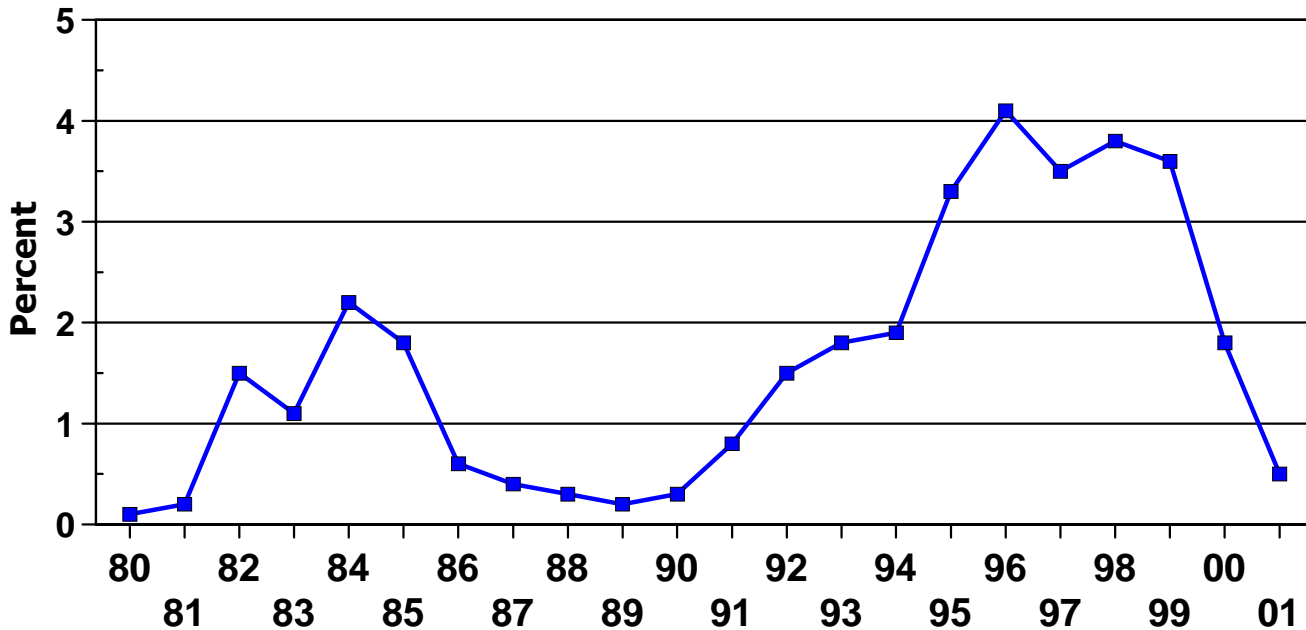
Vacancy Rates falling



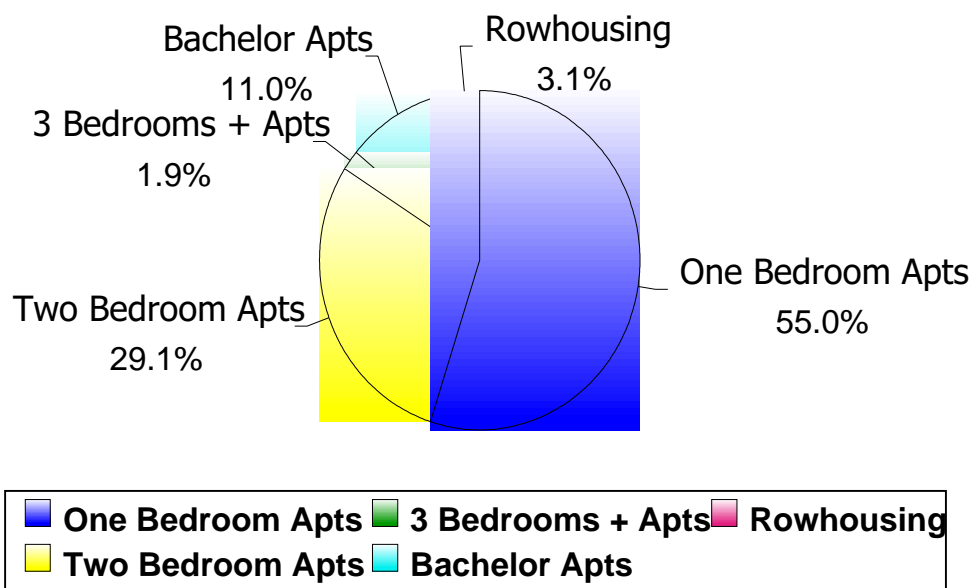
Vacancy Rates 2001



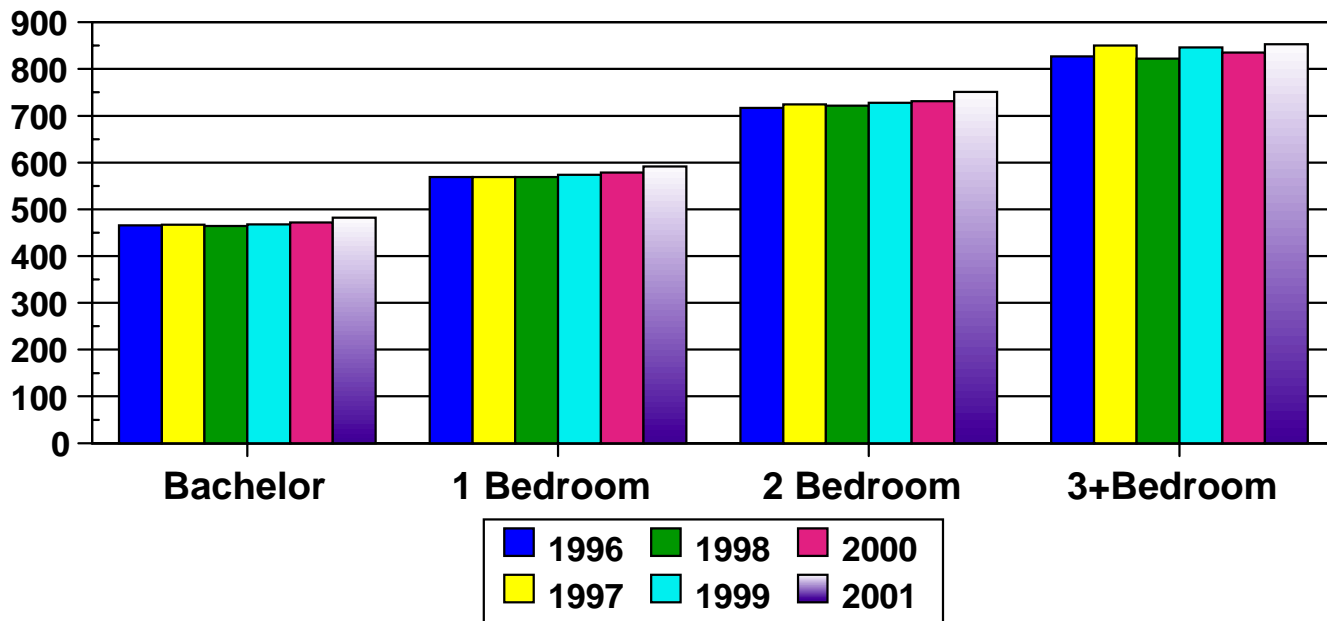
Apartment Vacancy Rate Metro Victoria - 1980 to 2001



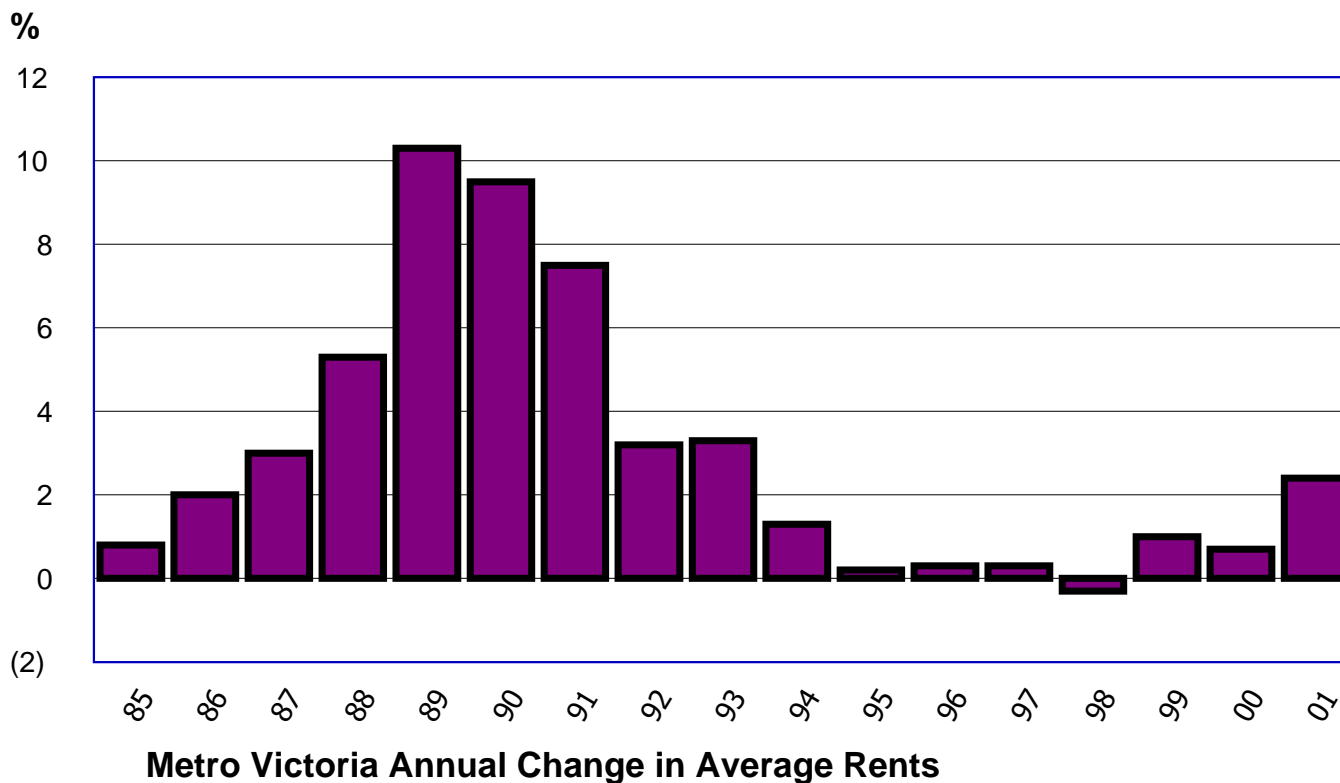
Rental Market Universe Metropolitan Victoria



Average Apartment Rents Metropolitan Victoria



Metro Victoria Rents Rising



(2)



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VANCOUVER ISLAND HOMEBUILDING UP IN FEBRUARY

VICTORIA, B.C. - MARCH 8, 2002 - Vancouver Island homebuilding rose to 168 new home starts in February from 103 in January, according to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Victoria. "Despite 2001's weak finish, Vancouver Island starts totalled one-third more than 2000 levels," said CMHC Market Analyst Peggy Prill. "Courtenay-Comox and Metro Victoria recorded the biggest jumps in new home starts last year, buoyed by stronger construction of both single family houses and apartments." B.C. starts dipped to 14,800 in December from 17,000 last month, seasonally adjusted at an annual rate (SAAR). Nationally, starts rose 4.0% to 175,500 SAAR. CMHC surveys homebuilding monthly across Canada. Local survey results are published monthly in CMHC Victoria's *Housing Now - Vancouver Island*. Summary info appears on the Internet at www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/bcyr-rcby. **CMHC is Canada's housing expert - CMHC Market Analysis forecasts are used by every sector of the housing industry.**

-30-

Preliminary numbers are summarized on the attached tables. **CMHC Graphs of the Month** are attached.

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