

Urban Development Institute - Victoria Chapter

Winter Issue - 2003



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 by phone at 658-4836 or by e-mail at: dgerrior@shaw.ca

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Contacts for the UDI Executive appear on page 2.



President's Message from Mike Wignall

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Urban Development Institute Newsletter.

The last few months have seen the usual assortment of highs and lows. On the plus side was the recent Downtown Victoria 2020 Conference (see page 3). I understand the conference generated much (and sometimes very frank) discussion on the issues facing downtown Victoria. Let's hope the positive energy coming out of the conference is put to good use and we see some success stories as a result of it.

One of the down side issues was the realization that the local Land Title's office (despite some last minute efforts by members of UDI) is, in fact, closing as planned in April, 2004. Hopefully, the individuals responsible for the closure anticipate some of the challenges they face in moving approximately 140 years of records to another location while implementing an effective online records system for the 127 years of records that are not yet available in a digital format. I'm sure we'll all be watching this process closely as it unfolds.

We've also seen some changes in the Executive of the local chapter in recent months. Art Kool has stepped down as president after a few years at the helm. Thank you Art, for a job well done. I appreciate the hard work you put in more and more with each passing week.

We have also, with reluctance, allowed Carl Novak to step down from the Executive this year. Carl also put in several years of hard work as Membership Chairman and Organizer of Special Events. Thank you for your efforts, Carl. Whenever you hunger for the thrill of life on the execu-

tive committee again, please call; we'd love to see you back.

The good news is that Glen Wilson has agreed to join the executive to take over my role on the Saanich Development Liaison Committee and Art Kool has agreed to take over from Carl as Membership Chairman. Thank you, Glen and Art.

As I settle into the role of president, I would like to explore ways to provide more value for membership in UDI. We are presently gathering ideas and plan to implement some of them early in the new year.

I would also like to see the profile of the Urban Development Institute raised somewhat. We are a good organization of hard working individuals, but we need to do a better job of being recognized in a positive way in the community as a forum for the development industry.

I welcome your ideas and comments on the above issues and if you want to learn more about the Urban Development Institute or would like to help out in some way, please feel free to contact myself or any of the executive members. (Contact information is provided on page 2).

In the meantime, have a safe and enjoyable holiday season...and may 2004 be prosperous for us all. ■

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Annual Christmas Luncheon Benefits Transition House

Our thanks to Lynda Mason of Crawford Paterson Campbell Chartered Accountants and Art Kool of First Island Financial for all their efforts in organizing the December 10th luncheon and prize raffle.

Luncheon attendees purchased almost \$1,000 in raffle tickets supporting the Victoria Women's Transition House Society. This emergency shelter provides safe accommodation for women, with or without children, leaving abusive situations. Its free services include emotional support and counseling; legal, medical, and financial advocacy; food and emergency clothing; and support from other women in similar situations.

Carolyn Fast, Executive Director of the Society, thanked luncheon participants. She explained that, "Our 18 beds are full most nights, serving 300 women and children each year. We refer another 150 to other services." The society is looking at developing a housing project in the next few years. ■

Real Estate Development on Native Lands

On November 27, UDI Pacific Region hosted a half-day session of speakers and seminars in Vancouver on Real Estate Development on Native Lands. For those who were unable to attend, eight of the presentations are available to download from the UDI web site at: http://www.udi.bc.ca/EventPages/NativeLands/native_lands.html ■

Profile: Mike Wignall, UDI Chapter President

So, who is the new Prez? Mike is a Professional Engineer who graduated from UBC in 1987. He's a senior land development engineer in Earth Tech's Victoria office. Mike is responsible for projects ranging from simple subdivisions, townhouse projects and commercial sites to larger multi-use, mixed density comprehensive developments and site servicing for large industrial facilities. Mike has also completed many utility projects for municipal governments. During the course of a project, he is responsible for project management, design review, specification writing, contract management and construction administration. In 1998, the Reid Crowther Annual Award of Excellence (Civil) was awarded to Mike's Gordon Point Estates subdivision project in Saanich. ■

UDI News regularly profiles new members and Executive.

Ideas For A Better Downtown Downtown Victoria 2020 Conference

How do we create and implement a plan to restore Downtown Victoria's lustre, economic vibrancy and social health?

Over 400 people with a stake in Victoria's downtown participated in the Downtown Victoria 2020 Conference held November 17 to 18 to brainstorm on the challenges and opportunities in our downtown. Participants represented a broad cross-section including planners, architects, developers, social service organizations, environmental and transportation experts, academics, business, retailers, community activists and neighbourhood organizations. The conference offered a

The Goal

To create a vision for a renewed downtown Victoria which is beautiful, economically vibrant, populous, socially responsive, a centre of job growth, culturally rich, and a model of urban ecology and sustainability.

series of forums with expert speakers sharing the ideas and approaches being tried in other places.

Conference Chair, Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley, managing director with Wave Consulting Ltd, is still working hard to keep a focus on inclusiveness. The November forum

was a great success, but the gathering of ideas has just begun. The conference web site at <http://dv2020.urbanreader.net> includes an Idea Form where all are invited to contribute thoughts and ideas. Ideas from the web, those from the conference and over 200 ideas submitted in response to newspaper ads are being combined to find the most doable.

For those of you who missed the conference, it will be broadcast regularly by Shaw Television until the next conference in the series is held.

Planning is well-underway for a second two-day forum at the end of March. Between now and then, it's hoped that 10 different projects will be started. The March 2004 conference will take into account the lessons of this first

forum and expand the circle of dialogue still further to explore additional topics. So far, three themes have been identified: how to make residential rental units and homeownership work in the downtown core; transportation planning to support residents; and public (green) space and public networks.

"The greatest catalyst for a more vibrant downtown is density – to have more people living downtown," according to Downtown Victoria 2020 Conference panelist, David Adams, UDI's Municipal Liaison with Victoria.

After the second conference, a Public Report and Action Plan will be published. The Downtown Victoria Community Alliance will begin the process of matching resources to ideas, and to community leaders who have the skill and energy to get things done.

View Architectural Ideas & Models

Architects, planners, landscape architects, artists and designers were invited to envision and draw an idea for improvement, alteration, or the brand-new development of buildings, open space, or landscape for locations in downtown Victoria. Their ideas, models and drawings continue to be displayed at the conference office at 725 Yates Street where a log-book is collecting additional feedback. All are welcome to drop by.

Conference Chair Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley adds, "There is an incredible appetite in this region to be active in planning a revitalized, vibrant and healthy Downtown Victoria. It's a very creative time in the life of our city. I invite the development community to take advantage of the next conference to connect with the broader community." ■

Saanich Zoning Bylaw Amended to include Adaptable Housing Guidelines

At a Public Hearing on November 18th, Saanich Council amended its Zoning Bylaw 8200 to include adaptable housing requirements and guidelines. The amendments aim to promote the construction of new apartment buildings designed to help people remain in place during illness, injury and aging.

UDI Chapter Members Gary Gilchrist, Mike Wignall and Glen Wilson were invited to provide input for the development community. The Chapter's active participation in committees such as the Development Process Review Committee offers a significant value to UDI members. In this case, they succeeded in suggesting changes to reduce the costs to developers associated with the bylaw, while still maintaining its intent.

UDI members succeeded in suggesting changes to reduce the costs to developers.

A new Schedule "F", Basic Adaptable Housing, outlines the requirements for adaptable housing, which must be provided in all newly constructed buildings serviced by an elevator containing apartment or congregate housing use (residential buildings accessory to a university, college, or school use are excluded).

The amendment also adds a new special regulation to allow an additional 1.5 m² (16 square feet) of floor space for each dwelling unit in an apartment building or congregate housing building that is constructed in accordance with the adaptable housing requirements and guidelines.

Pam Hartling, the Research Planner who developed the guidelines, states, "There is no intent to apply these standards to single family dwellings. Several municipalities have expressed interest in adopting similar guidelines and Saanich staff will be providing them with information."

The Town of Sidney already has in place Zoning Bylaw 1660, which includes Section 3.2 on Adaptable Housing guidelines, items 1 through 18. The bylaw is available at: <http://www.town.sidney.bc.ca/bylaws/1660.htm>.

The City of Colwood has begun to incorporate adaptable housing principals in some of their recent developments including the 91-unit Parkwood Manor, developed by Glen Wilson, a Partner in Searidge Consulting Inc.

Glen explains that, "The Saanich bylaw provides for enough space and amenities for residents as they age to address general arthritis and mobility issues, allowing for canes and walkers. It provides for easy access to their front door with wider hallways and doorways, automatic door openers, and somewhat larger bathrooms."

Russ Fuoco, the Director of Planning Services, recommends that the amendments come into effect approximately six months after the date of bylaw adoption. Council supports his suggestion to distribute the Adaptable Housing Design Requirements and Guidelines to the building community to promote awareness and understanding.

The Adaptable Housing Amendment Bylaw 2003, is No. 8505. To have a bylaw mailed or faxed to you, phone the District of Saanich at (250) 475-1775 or e-mail clerksec@gov.saanich.bc.ca. ■

New CitiesPLUS Publication

Lourette Swanepoel, of The Sheltair Group in Vancouver, announces the release of a new citiesPLUS Publication entitled: "Tools for Planning for Long-term Urban Sustainability: The citiesPLUS Design Charrettes."

This publication was made possible with the financial support of Western Economic Diversification and CMHC. It documents the highlights from the citiesPLUS Integrated Design Workshops held in November 2002 and it is now available for download or purchase (\$75) from www.citiesPLUS.ca. ■

Working with Community Associations

Contributed by David Gerrior, President of the Cordova Bay Association

For many developers, attending community association meetings to review proposed development plans is something of an ordeal. Unless you're very familiar with the community, it's difficult to gauge the kind of reception you'll receive. This article reviews some things to consider in order to make your proposal successful.

How does a Community Association come into existence?

Community associations are, in many cases, created from a sense of frustration and sometimes anger at local officials. They are often born from a single issue but continue to exist to protect their local environment. There is no real reason for them to exist because we have a local government that is supposed to represent all of the residents. But in all fairness to elected officials, they cannot be completely aware of the issues in every local area. Residents feel their neighbourhood is special and unique and deserves nothing but the best.

As citizens become more removed from the political process they tend to focus on local governments. This is where true democracy reigns supreme. People, by and large, do not feel their voices are heard at the federal or provincial level, but the local level provides a unique opportunity for all citizens to be heard. At open council meetings, every resident has an opportunity to express themselves on the topic under discussion. This is a powerful tool and can reflect the sense of frustration average citizens have in controlling their lives and environment.

At the same time, municipalities are often caught in a quandary of what is best for the entire community and are not specifically focused on one region. I like to call these "cultural areas" which have a unique history and independent sense of community. In the greater Victoria region we have many communities that fit into this cultural community category, such as James Bay, Cook Street Village, Cadboro Bay and Cordova Bay. Cultural areas have a heightened sense of community and are very protective. Your 10-lot subdivision may not be, in your eyes, a major development but to the residents it may be threatening important and sensitive areas or represent a shift in community demographics.

Meeting with the Community

Many municipalities now require that the community association be involved in the loop from the very beginning. This may seem like duplication of the established public process but it differs in many respects. Meeting with the community will give you a preview of how your proposal will be received. They may be trying to limit expansion of the Urban Containment Boundary or looking to ensure that development charges remain in their community rather than going into general revenues. They may have concerns about development that does not reflect future considerations for adequate park space. These are details that you might not discover from talking to the Planning personnel behind the desk.

Putting up the rezoning application sign

This should not be the first time a local community association hears about your proposal. Trust me, when the application sign goes up, the association will receive many phone calls from mistrustful residents. It is best to have advised the association before hand so that they can address citizens' concerns immediately. If possible, you should have worked out a process that can be articulated to neighbours about the type of development and timetable for development. No one likes to be blindsided and this is especially true of the local community. The community association is an excellent sounding board and often mirrors the discussion that occurs at Council. Always remember, community associations cannot approve or reject a proposal. That responsibility remains with Council, but the association can either be a formidable ally or opponent. Council will always weigh carefully the attitude and position of the local community association.

Successfully approaching a local Association

The first step is to let the association know that you have an interest in a specific parcel of land. This is especially important with in-fill properties. The availability of these properties is often the result of someone passing away who has owned the property for generations. The family has moved on and is no longer living in the community and the best choice for them is to sell the land for development.

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Community Associations Continued

The local residents are often unaware that the open spaces they have become used to, and taken for granted, are now going to be developed. It comes as a shock. So, what can you do to ease the transition?

The first step is to look at your plans, establish a timetable and prepare to meet with the association executive. Here are a few items you should have in your possession before approaching the association executive:

- If possible, get to know the executive members and backgrounds. I know executives that consist of lawyers, engineers, civil servants, former building inspectors and journalists. This is a very savvy group who will pose difficult and probing questions. On the other hand, you can be faced with a group that is not as knowledgeable. It is best to prepare for both scenarios. If you are prepared in advance it will go a long way to having your application supported.
- A detailed map for the area under discussion. An aerial photograph can be helpful and is easily obtained from the municipality.
- Existing zoning details and rezoning details being applied for.
- Have a plan for communicating your proposal to the neighbours and area to be canvassed. All too often the developer sticks to the minimum municipal notification limits. This can be as little as 30 to 60 feet from the edge of the property. This is no longer sufficient and the association can provide advice on the area they consider appropriate for notification.
- Size and description of lot(s).
- Proposed housing plan, sizes or subdivision plan.
- Timing schedule for applications.
- Timing schedule for development.
- Indication that proposed final development maintains the character of the existing community.
- Tree survey. This is a very tricky one. Where one arborist sees a group of dying trees, another will see a living forest where some trees are dying but second growth and immature trees are poised to take over from the older trees. It is a question of interpretation, so be sure you have your facts straight.

Once you have as much information as possible, approach the association to schedule a meeting time. You may be meeting with the entire executive or a special body set up to review proposals (planning group). With the help of the group, establish what you need to do to satisfy their concerns and set-up a timetable for a public meeting and returning to the association on a regular basis. This is not only good manners but will put you in good stead with the association. They are looking for a project that will benefit the community and for your willingness to compromise and cooperate.

Meeting with your Neighbours

One of the first steps an association will take is to request a public meeting for the immediate residents. Remember, they may have a different idea of what constitutes the immediate area. Be prepared to meet residents who are concerned about the effect downstream from your development.

At your open house, set up a register for people to sign-in. This gives you a list of who came to your open house and is useful for updating the residents on your progress. Most frustration comes from residents when they feel they have not been consulted and feel the developer is pushing the development without regard to the community. Keep them apprised of your development plans. This list is also helpful when reporting back to the association and Council on the open house. It is tangible proof that you have done the proper consultation.

Final Points

My best advice to developers is to be scrupulously honest in describing your project at an executive or public meeting. Any sign that a developer is avoiding a question or aspect of how the process will proceed will be met with very serious opposition. If you are not sure how to answer a question, let people know that they have asked an excellent question and you would like time to consider your response. Agree to communicate your response to the residents and the association in a timely manner. If you promise to do something, be sure you do it. Have someone with you to take notes and review that list with the residents before the session ends. Finally, remember that community associations exist to protect the nature and sense of community. If you deal on a fair and open basis most associations will welcome your involvement in their community. ■

Official Opening: Continuing Studies Building, University of Victoria

We hope to regularly profile new buildings in upcoming editions of “UDI News”. Let us know about your project at dgerrior@shaw.ca or call David Gerrior at 658-4836.

When students, faculty and staff arrive for classes at UVic’s new Continuing Studies Building — which officially opened on December 1st — they’ll be able to read by natural light, shower after cycling to campus, and teach in specially equipped language labs.

“Continuing studies provides lifelong learning opportunities for adult part-time learners,” says Dr. Wesley Koczka, Dean of Continuing Studies. “Last year we delivered programs and courses to 17,000 students and contributed nearly \$30 million to the local economy. Now, in our state-of-the-art building, our contribution to the community will be even greater—we’ll be able to offer a greater range of courses to an even larger audience.”

The three-storey building at the corner of Gabriola and Ring Roads cost \$9.6 million and took just 10 months to construct. As part of UVic’s commitment to green initiatives, the building boasts a number of energy-conserving features. The L-shaped design takes full advantage of natural light using plenty of energy-efficient windows, sun screens and lighting. To conserve water, the plumbing is adapted to accept future grey water and all washrooms are equipped with water-saving devices. There is storm water retention on site and showers for cyclists to promote sustainable transportation.

The building includes 16 classrooms, two state of the art language labs, instructor resource rooms, seminar, meeting, and interview rooms. The Division of Continuing Studies invested the \$9.6 million from course fees in this self-funded project. The department will host a public open house on Thursday, January 15 from 4:30 to 7 p.m.

Building Design and Construction

- 3934 square metres, three storeys
- Architect: Warner James Architects Inc.
- General Contractor: Farmer Construction Limited
- Civil Engineer: Stantec Ltd.
- Code Consultant: Locke McKinnon Domingo Gibson & Associates Ltd.
- Electrical Engineer: Applied Engineering Solutions Ltd.
- Landscape Architect: Vaughan Landscape Planning & Design
- Mechanical Engineer: Hirschfield Williams Timmins Ltd.
- Structural Engineer: Peterson Galloway Ltd.
- Construction Began: January 1, 2003
- The construction was completed on target on November 7, 2003

Environmentally-friendly Features

- Energy-efficient windows and sun screens
- Water efficient washrooms
- Showers to encourage bicycle commuting
- Storm water retention on-site
- Energy-efficient light fixtures
- Building is dual plumbed to accept future grey water
- Satellite-controlled timepieces throughout the building. ■

Making Room: The Human Face of Affordability in BC's Capital Region

At UDI's December 10th luncheon, copies of a powerful new publication were distributed by Mabel Jean Rawlins-Brannan, Executive Director of the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria. To obtain copies of "Making Room", call the Community Council at 383-6166 or visit <http://www.qolchallenge.ca/homes.html>.

Victoria's critical lack of affordable housing is affecting parents and their children, people with disabilities, widows living in isolation, single men looking for work, Aboriginal people, the working poor, and youth struggling to make it on their own. All are part of our community, and yet many find there is no room for them. Some are hiding illegally in shared accommodation; others live without electricity, many feel caught in a "poverty trap." Research conducted by the Community Council over the course of a year sheds new light on the human aspect of well-known statistics about the region's housing crunch:

- More than 22,000 households were in "core housing need" – meaning they could not find decent, affordable housing without spending more than 30% of income on shelter (1996).
- Housing prices are among the highest in Canada while vacancy rates are among the lowest.

The 40-page booklet, "Making Room: The Human Face of Housing Affordability in BC's Capital Region", gives voice to the perspectives of people living on low and moderate incomes about their housing situations in everything from rooming houses, illegal suites, and dilapidated trailers to assisted housing, co-ops and apartment complexes.

Each of the 90 voices whose daily experiences informed this work responded to researchers' questions about the qualitative aspects of their housing conditions, from health to income to connections to the community. The interview samples were rigorously designed to represent six vulnerable population groups and to proportionately represent the number of people on low income living in each of the municipalities of the Capital Regional District. Of the 90 residents interviewed:

- more than three-quarters (78%) were living on incomes under \$14,999

- half were paying more than \$400 a month for their shelter
- 34% were employed, 40% received income from government, and 13% found support from both employment and government sources.

"Making Room" shows housing as more than a roof over one's head: it's about people's daily lives – in doing their laundry, getting around, accessing services, being assured of safety in their homes, living in healthy conditions. And yet, many of the residents of the Capital Region are struggling with the hidden costs of housing that can drain energy and well-being. Many are demoralized by the lack of choices in neighbourhoods and amenities. Some fear for their own or their children's safety. Many feel powerless in dealings with their landlords.

In fact, the responses shed light on just how profoundly the issue of stable, decent housing is at the root of people's ability to take advantage of opportunities in education, health and employment. The findings make strong links between housing and employment, transportation, hidden costs, health and safety. These include:

- the working poor, often in the service sector, earn at or below the region's median income, putting average rents out of their reach.
- the evolving recognition that homelessness includes those who spend most of their income on rent or who live in overcrowded, substandard conditions, and are therefore at serious risk of becoming homeless.
- the amount of money people receive in government income support is too low to cover their monthly minimum costs of living.
- total dependency on public transit poses so many financial and accessibility challenges that it raises the question of how equitable and inclusive the transit system is for those on low and moderate incomes.
- studies increasingly show that people with inadequate housing who are also living on low incomes tend to be less healthy.

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Making Room: (cont)

When safe, affordable housing is within people's grasp, it becomes the platform for fundamental transformation. One 32-year-old First Nations woman from Kamloops says her life was turned around simply by finding decent housing. She was helped from the streets to a women's transition shelter and finally, to her present subsidized rental apartment in Victoria.

"I am in school and I want to get somewhere. And it makes me feel like I am going to get to that place. When I come back to this place, it's nice. It just kind of goes with my goals that I have for myself because I am not going back to a dirty old dump. I am more involved in my community. You know the housing actually does a lot. I feel so much better."

The booklet also suggests actions that can be taken based on the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy by neighbours, municipalities, community associations and developers. The Community Social Planning Council's goal is to support the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (RHAS), now under development, in building an inclusive community - one that allows all of our neighbours to participate fully in the life of the Capital Region. Many organizations from all sectors are supporting the RHAS through the Housing Affordability Partnership.

"Making Room: The Human Face of Housing Affordability in BC's Capital Region" was funded by the Vancouver Island Health Authority, the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy and the Quality of Life CHALLENGE. ■

Regional Housing Affordability Strategy

On October 24, 2001, the CRD Board approved initiation of a project to develop a practical and effective Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (RHAS) for the Capital Region, to ensure that all residents of the Capital Region, especially moderate and low income households, have a reasonable choice of housing by type, tenure, price/rent and location, over both the short and long term.

The Project Manager, Chris Goldburn, advises that the consultants' Final Report is now complete and available as

a 66-page PDF document at: http://www.crd.bc.ca/regplan/rgs/reports/strategic/documents/FinalReport_003.pdf.

A four page Executive Summary is at: <http://www.crd.bc.ca/regplan/rgs/reports/strategic/documents/fexsum.pdf>.

The CRD Board has authorized its release to member councils, stakeholders and the public for initial comment. This Report is not the Strategy, but a document for consultation. The Strategy will be prepared based on the comments and suggestions received from the circulation described above, probably early in 2004.

As one of the key recommendations of this report involves the establishment of a Housing Trust Fund, a second report outlining a business case and options for the creation of such a body has been prepared and will be sent to the municipalities and stakeholders with the Final Report. A Discussion Paper on Housing Trusts is available on-line at: <http://www.crd.bc.ca/regplan/rgs/reports/strategic/documents/hsgfundforWeb.pdf>.

For more information, contact Chris Goldburn, the Project Manager at cgoldburn@crd.bc.ca or at 360-3156. ■

Who is Taking up the Housing Affordability Challenge in the Capital Region?

Speaking at the December 10 UDI Luncheon, Mabel Jean Rawlins-Brannan, Executive Director of the Community Council, commended the UDI Victoria Chapter for its support of housing affordability in the Capital Region. She noted that UDI Executive members (currently Henry Kamphof and Glen Wilson) participate on the Housing Affordability Partnership committee and that the issue is discussed at every Executive meeting.

During Housing Affordability Week this October, the Community Council recognized the accomplishments listed below. In the past year, 240 units were constructed in the Capital Region providing safe, decent and affordable housing. If you have an additional project that should be recognized, contact the Council at 383-6166. You may receive a Quality of Life CHALLENGE decal to display at your workplace.

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Housing Affordability Challenge continued

1. Central Saanich Council and Planning Department for Residential Guidelines to assess the affordability of applications and passing a resolution indicating how they will take up the housing challenge.
2. 4 families have benefited from Habitat for Humanity - 2 houses complete in Victoria; 2 houses complete in Sidney (one grand opening held in October in Sidney) and 4 more planned.
3. CEDCO VICTORIA redeveloped an old motel into 21-unit CEDAR GROVE APARTMENTS in partnership with Canadian Housing Research Foundation, Victoria Community Housing Trust, Vancouver Foundation, Victoria Landscaping Gravel Mart, Lochside Nursery, Marigold Nursery, Cannor Nursery, R & R Enterprises, Coast Capital Savings and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
4. CEDCO Victoria established the Victoria Community Housing Trust in partnership with the Housing Affordability Partnership, the Community Council and Coast Capital Savings.
5. 42 families now have a safe, decent and affordable place to call home because the Aboriginal Housing Transition Project of the Victoria Native Friendship Centre supported property owners and residents to provide stable housing for families.
6. Royal Bay Development Ltd., Moody Consultants and City Spaces – developed a liveable, walkable community that includes secondary suites in Royal Bay, Colwood.
7. City of Colwood Council is growing an Affordable Housing Fund from collecting \$1500 per unit zoned in new developments.
8. District of Saanich for Adaptable Housing Requirements and adoption of universal accessibility regulations for all multiple units.
9. District of Langford Council for giving direction to prepare an affordable housing zone, reserve fund and policy for improving moderate income households' access to ownership housing.
10. In District of Oak Bay a committee of council has examined the housing needs of senior residents and is reporting to Council this fall.
11. Gonzales Neighbourhood, with Fairfield Community Association is endorsing secondary suites in houses of all ages in their updated Neighbourhood Plan.
12. Over 300 homeless families have been assisted through the Burnside Gorge Community Association for Homeless Family Outreach which finds housing for families.
13. Many more people now have a safe, decent and affordable place to call home because Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation supported 6 new projects in BC's Capital Region through the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP).
14. JONES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION DEVELOPED JOHN ALFRED MANOR – the old Times Colonist Building converted into 99 new units of supportive housing for seniors & people with disabilities; in partnership with Mark 7 Devels., Society for the Christian Care of the Elderly, and the Vancouver Island Health Authority.
15. MIKE KELLY AND CAREY SANGHA OF GORGE ROAD PROPERTIES REDEVELOPED THE JOLLY KNIGHT MOTEL into 49 self-contained apartment suites for low income single persons in partnership with CMHC.
16. TANYA AND GEOFF HUGHES converted the old SAINT JOSEPH HOSPITAL into 70 seniors supportive living units in partnership with CMHC.
17. WILLIAM AND DIANA WRIGHT DEVELOPED DOWLER PLACE into a rooming house redeveloped for suites for 9 low income singles in partnership with CMHC.
18. Jim and April Vance redeveloped Vance House in partnership with CMHC. They upgraded a single detached home in Colwood to accommodate 5 single adult deaf persons, with onsite support services. ■

Gorge/Tillicum/Burnside “Smart Transportation” Charrette

Residents of the Gorge/Tillicum/Burnside area of Saanich are looking to create two vibrant mixed-use corridors, anchored by three urban village centres. The Gorge/Tillicum/Burnside community includes a range of attractive housing options, excellent regional access, an active retail core, and a variety of community amenities.

The District of Saanich is preparing an Action Plan to improve the community by addressing issues such as heavy traffic, a lack of facilities for pedestrians, cyclists or transit, and low-intensity land uses. As part of that process, the Gorge/Tillicum Community Association engaged Smart Growth BC to coordinate a public forum and a weekend charrette. Smart Growth BC is a non-profit organization working towards more liveable communities in British Columbia. The public forum was held on September 22, 2003, and included a presentation on smart growth and transportation.

On October 17 through 19, 2003, a dedicated group of community leaders – including residents, local property owners, developers, and other citizens – came together to create a plan to apply smart transportation solutions in the Tillicum Road and Burnside Road corridors. In an atmosphere of trust, professional architects and planners helped these stakeholders to make their own design decisions through a process of building consensus.

The charrette event for the Gorge/Tillicum/Burnside community was facilitated by Franc D’Ambrosio (D’Ambrosio architecture + urbanism) and his staff, along with Patrick Condon (UBC James Taylor Chair in Landscape and Liveable Environments). With their assistance, the charrette participants worked hard over the entire weekend to prepare plans for the Tillicum and Burnside corridors and three urban villages at the major intersections (Tillicum/Gorge, Tillicum/Burnside, and Burnside/Harriet).

Glen Wilson of Searidge Consulting Inc., UDI’s Municipal Liaison with Saanich, participated and has provided the following list of some of the key ideas generally agreed upon:

- That the traffic was here to stay but we wanted to control the speeds and manage the effects on pedestrians.
- The number of lanes to be decreased in some cases

and the width of lanes to be decreased.

- Bike lanes to be added and sidewalks to be separated from the traffic with boulevards.
- Trees and green space to be added to the streetscape.
- Centre medians to be discouraged to discourage traffic speeds in favor of boulevards.
- Improvements to be funded from development therefore encouraging sensible densification.
- Densification to occur along Tillicum and Burnside Roads.
- Prezone the area to encourage investment in the area.
- Consider higher density commercial in the triangle north of the intersection of Tillicum and Burnside.
- Consider higher density on the mall site closer to Tillicum.
- Consider seniors housing on the mall site in combination with a library and seniors centre.

Glen Wilson says, “This area has great attributes but also has some problems. The community is hoping for some change to occur over the next few years and appears to be realistic about what will need to occur. There may be a great opportunity to change a neighborhood into an even better place to live.”

An open house was held at the end of the charrette event to present the draft plans to the public. Over 40 residents, property owners, and other interested persons came to view the plans, ask questions, and provide feedback to the representatives who participated in the charrette.

D’Ambrosio architecture + urbanism will transform the draft plans into final form, based on input received at the public open house. The final plans are expected in early 2004, and will provide valuable input into the Action Plan process of the District of Saanich. The plans will be available at www.smartgrowth.bc.ca. ■

AVERAGE RENTAL VACANCY RATE RISES TO 2.2 PER CENT

OTTAWA - December 2, 2003 - The average rental apartment vacancy rate in Canada's 28 metropolitan areas¹ rose to 2.2 per cent in October 2003 from 1.7 per cent a year ago, but is below the average of 3.4 per cent over the 1992 to 2002 period, according to the Rental Market Survey released by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) today. This is the second consecutive annual increase in the vacancy rate.

"The rise in the vacancy rate over the past year reflects a number of factors," said Bob Dugan, Chief Economist at CMHC's Market Analysis Centre. "Foremost among these are low mortgage rates, which reduced mortgage carrying costs and lessened demand for rental housing by bringing home ownership within the reach of many renter households. Vacancy rates also rose because rental apartment completions added new rental supply in many centres."

"Nationally, vacancy rates have increased across the range of rent levels in a number of large centres. Nevertheless, at the most affordable level, there is still an inadequate supply of units. Therefore, there is a need to add to the affordable rental stock. This fact is reinforced by evidence that a large proportion of low income families have to pay more than 30 per cent of their income for rent." said Bob Dugan, Chief Economist at CMHC.

Vacancy rates were higher than one year ago in 20 of Canada's 28 metropolitan areas. Saint John (NB), Saguenay, Saskatoon, Calgary and Windsor had the highest vacancy rates, while

Québec, Sherbrooke, Victoria, Montréal, and Gatineau were among the cities with the lowest vacancy rates.

Vacancy rates were higher in nine of Ontario's 11 metropolitan areas. Rates increased by at least one percentage point in Hamilton, Toronto, Kingston, and Ottawa.

In Quebec, four of six metropolitan areas had higher vacancy rates than in 2002. The greatest relative increase occurred in Gatineau (from 0.7 per cent to 1.2 per cent), while Montréal, Québec, and Saguenay vacancy rates rose modestly. Vacancy rates in Sherbrooke and Trois-Rivières declined by more than one per cent each.

Vacancy rates went up in seven of eight metropolitan areas in the Prairies and British Columbia. The only decline was in Victoria, from 1.5 per cent to 1.1 per cent.

In Atlantic Canada, the vacancy rate in Saint John (NB) fell 1.1 percentage points to 5.2 per cent. In spite of this, Saint John and Saguenay had the highest vacancy rate of all Canadian metropolitan areas. Vacancy rates also fell in both Halifax and St. John's (NFLD).

CMHC's annual Rental Market Survey also shows that average rents for two-bedroom apartments increased in all metropolitan areas except Toronto and Calgary, where rents were essentially flat (down 0.7 per cent in Toronto, unchanged in Calgary). The greatest increase occurred in Gatineau, where rents

were up 6.7 per cent. Kingston posted the second-largest increase at 5.6 per cent. Average rents in London, Winnipeg, Saguenay, and Montreal were all up by about four per cent. Nationally, rent increases were highest at the lower end of the rent spectrum.

The highest average monthly rents for two-bedroom apartments were in Toronto (\$1,040), Vancouver (\$965), and Ottawa (\$932). The lowest average rents were in Trois-Rivières (\$436) and Saguenay (\$457). ■

CMHC's Rental Market Survey is conducted yearly in October, to provide vacancy rate and rent information on privately initiated apartment structures containing at least three rental units.

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VACANCY RATES IN APARTMENT STRUCTURES OF THREE UNITS AND OVER PRIVATELY INITIATED, IN METROPOLITAN AREAS

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Atlantic Region					
St.John's	9.2	3.8	2.5	2.7	2.0
Halifax	3.6	3.6	2.8	2.7	2.3
Saint John	5.2	3.4	5.6	6.3	5.2
Quebec Region					
Gatineau	4.4	1.4	0.6	0.5	1.2
Montréal	3.0	1.5	0.6	0.7	1.0
Québec	3.3	1.6	0.8	0.3	0.5
Saguenay	4.9	4.4	4.4	4.9	5.2
Sherbrooke	7.6	4.7	2.3	1.8	0.7
Trois-Rivières	7.9	6.8	4.7	3.0	1.5
Ontario Region					
Hamilton	1.9	1.7	1.3	1.6	3.0
Kingston*	3.4	1.8	1.5	0.9	1.9
Kitchener	1.0	0.7	0.9	2.3	3.2
London	3.5	2.2	1.6	2.0	2.1
Oshawa	1.7	1.7	1.3	2.3	2.9
Ottawa	0.7	0.2	0.8	1.9	2.9
St.Catharines-Niagara	3.2	2.6	1.9	2.4	2.7
Greater Sudbury	11.1	7.7	5.7	5.1	3.6
Thunder Bay	7.5	5.8	5.8	4.7	3.3
Toronto	0.9	0.6	0.9	2.5	3.8
Windsor	2.7	1.9	2.9	3.9	4.3
Prairie Region					
Calgary	2.8	1.3	1.2	2.9	4.4
Edmonton	2.2	1.4	0.9	1.7	3.4
Regina	1.4	1.4	2.1	1.9	2.1
Saskatoon	0.9	1.7	2.9	3.7	4.5
Winnipeg	3.0	2.0	1.4	1.2	1.3
British Columbia Region					
Abbotsford*	6.7	3.7	2.4	2.0	2.5
Vancouver	2.7	1.4	1.0	1.4	2.0
Victoria	3.6	1.8	0.5	1.5	1.1
Total (1)	2.6	1.6	1.1	1.7	2.2

(1) Weighted average of Metropolitan Areas Surveyed does not include the newly created Abbotsford and Kingston CMAs prior to 2002.

* Data prior to 2002 is based on the census agglomeration definition; 2002 and 2003 data is based on the census metropolitan area definition.

Weighted Average Rent by Metropolitan Area Privately Initiated Three Apartment Units and Over

	One-Bedroom		Two-Bedroom	
	Oct. 2002	Oct. 2003	Oct. 2002	Oct. 2003
Atlantic Region	\$	\$	\$	\$
St.John's	510	520	589	607
Halifax	572	596	704	720
Saint John	424	423	492	504
Quebec Region				
Gatineau	509	548	599	639
Montréal	505	528	552	575
Québec	489	506	550	567
Saguenay	370	374	440	457
Sherbrooke	369	385	456	471
Trois-Rivières	370	382	431	436
Ontario Region				
Hamilton	627	633	765	778
Kingston	598	627	727	768
Kitchener	638	646	750	754
London	566	586	705	736
Oshawa	713	752	819	845
Ottawa	767	768	930	932
St.Catharines-Niagara	583	600	695	704
Greater Sudbury	513	524	647	651
Thunder Bay	532	552	657	672
Toronto	891	884	1,047	1,040
Windsor	638	650	769	776
Prairie Region				
Calgary	657	661	804	804
Edmonton	575	588	709	722
Regina	480	490	581	589
Saskatoon	461	469	567	576
Winnipeg	490	508	622	645
British Columbia Region				
Abbotsford	530	537	650	672
Vancouver	743	759	954	965
Victoria	605	619	771	789