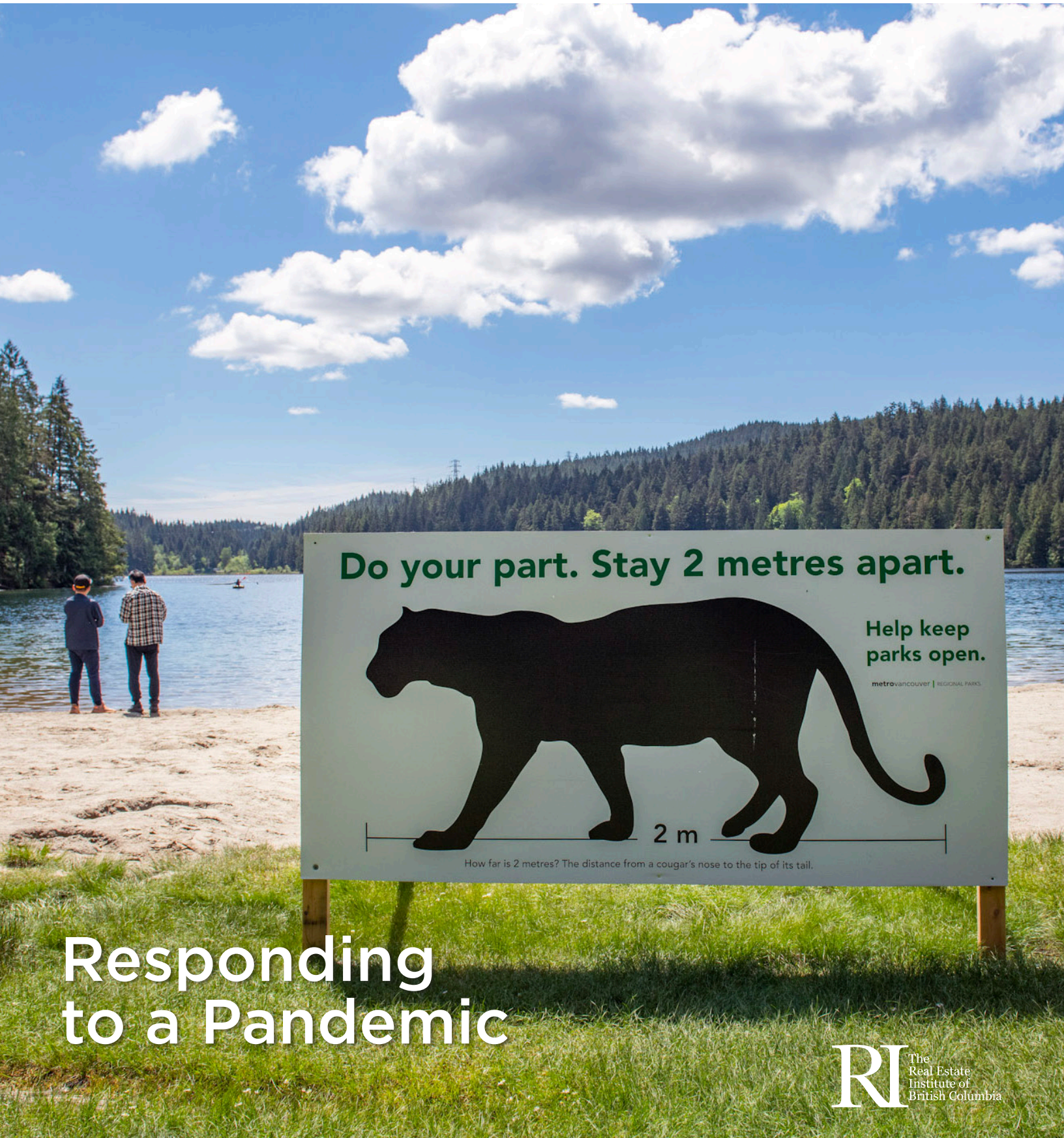


# INPUT

LAND AND REAL ESTATE  
ISSUES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA



## Responding to a Pandemic



# INPUT

*Input* is the official publication of **The Real Estate Institute of BC (REIBC)**.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**SUSAN ANTONIALI, RI**  
REIBC PRESIDENT

REIBC strives to provide membership services to our community—colleagues, partners and clients—with the goal of excellence, so that members can engage with and grow in the industry. With pandemic restrictions in place for the past year, we have been providing membership services differently.

I do have to say I miss seeing you in person and the opportunity to connect and engage with the network energy. But on the positive side of this time, the 2020 Presidents' Luncheon gave the opportunity for international speakers, via Zoom, to give us an update on activities in their part of the world. Also, our webinars and virtual meetings have been well attended across the province, and have covered many informative subjects such as federal budget, tax update, land titles, ICI, and foreclosures, to name a few. Recently, REIBC and partners released a new research paper, Space for Community, and an educational and informative four-week series on "Indigenous Relations in British Columbia" was provided by member Peter Walters. We've also seen the Career Opportunities section of the website help many employers and RIs find each other.

Our new ProSeries showcases the expertise of our RI professionals and promotes interaction and growth in their specialized areas of practice. The series highlights sincere lessons and messages that align with REIBC's Vision, Mission and Values. I would encourage all members to check out ProSeries and spread the word with industry colleagues.

I would like to thank the Board of Governors for their time to provide strategic planning and policy for the strength of the Institute. Also, I would like to thank volunteers from our community who have provided specific subject matter expertise or have written articles for us.

The past two years as president have been a great privilege, even though this time with the pandemic has made them very different. I am confident that the Board of Governors and staff will be phasing into the new normal with new membership opportunities learned from this time.



COVER: Metro Vancouver regional parks experienced a 38% increase in visitation rates in 2020 from the year previous. Signs like this at Belcarra Regional Park reminded visitors to maintain a safe distance. Photo by Metro Vancouver.

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## FROM THE EO'S DESK



**BRENDA SOUTHAM**  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

It is July 2021, the weather is warm, and BC has over 5 million people vaccinated. We are, hopefully, moving toward our post-pandemic future. But over the past year and more, the real estate industry has been responding to the pandemic and discovering creativity and resilience. It's always interesting to get an "on the ground" response, and a few of those stories are told here.

Many organizations quickly moved to online events and sales, and we hear from BIAs that grants and assistance were provided by local tech businesses and volunteers—an example of everyone reaching out to help in their way and understanding that we are all in this together.

Not all businesses made it, though. Businesses and residents alike, as leaseholders, had a particularly tough time in spite of supports, described by Lex Pacifica in our Ask a Lawyer column.

Parks in BC saw more traffic as people frequented local and regional parks more than ever before. We hear from Metro Vancouver and the City of North Vancouver what transpired for them and the ways they adapted their services to keep parks in use and everyone safe.

We also know that residents in multifamily rental and strata buildings were affected. Many things needed to change to protect workers and residents: programs, meetings, social activities, maintenance, and working from home. New rules affected every aspect of how we live and if we could gather, which of course we couldn't in large numbers.

Real estate boards tell us about the resilience of realtors and the new protocols they set up. It is noted that some of the protocols will probably stay in place as we move forward into the next phase of this pandemic. I wonder if we will ever return to past ways of doing business?

Take care all. Enjoy the summer and be safe.



### ABOUT

*Input* was established in 1976. It ran at 12 pages and stayed that size for a long time. It was more like a newsletter then: when something new happened in the real estate industry, one of our RIs wrote about it, but the publication didn't cover much industry information otherwise.

Many years later, *Input* runs at an average of 48 pages, sometimes a bit bigger or smaller, and our authors hail from around the globe. Our focus is on keeping readers informed with all aspects of the industry, particularly hot topics.

REIBC delivers *Input* to 4,000 people or organizations within the real estate industry.

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- REIBC members
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- SPA-BC – Strata Property Agents of BC
- Government ministries
- Real estate boards

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

**Please let us know your ideas for upcoming issues and how you like the magazine—and check out our Facebook and Twitter pages for up-to-the-minute information on REIBC activities.**

**reibc.org**  
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## CONTRIBUTORS



**Liam Griffin** is the communications and partnerships manager for Brightside Community Homes Foundation. Steward of the Brightside narrative, he is the organization's storyteller-in-chief, conveying stories of impact and change to increase public awareness and focusing Brightside's advocacy for more affordable housing. Griffin offers extensive knowledge and expertise in the area of public engagement and digital communications. Working with other values-aligned organizations, he leads the pursuit of supportive partnerships that aim to foster resilient communities and bolster Brightside's capacity to provide affordable housing. Griffin is also a core member of the organization's COVID-19 Advisory Committee, playing a central role in the organization's emergency response and resident communications. Driven by his passion for equity, community, and inclusion, he also serves as a volunteer board member with the Lesya Ukrainka Housing Society. [brightsidehomes.ca](http://brightsidehomes.ca)



**Oscar Miklos** is the founding lawyer of Refresh Law, a law firm advising strata owners, strata council members, property managers, and residential and commercial landlords and tenants in all aspects of housing disputes. Miklos is also the editor of *HousingGuide.ca*, which offers free online references for homeowners in BC. [refreshlaw.ca](http://refreshlaw.ca)



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**Mike Hunter** is the manager of the Parks and Environment division at the City of North Vancouver. He is a Registered Professional Biologist who also likes to pretend he's a park planner. Hunter has been with the City for over 20 years and works with a talented team that designs, builds, and maintains a diverse system of parks and public spaces. [cnv.org](http://cnv.org)

**Metro Vancouver** is a federation of 21 municipalities, one electoral area, and one treaty First Nation that collaboratively plans for and delivers regional-scale services. Its core services are drinking water, wastewater treatment, and solid waste management. Metro Vancouver also regulates air quality, plans for urban growth, manages a regional parks system, and provides affordable housing. The regional district is governed by a board of directors of elected officials from each federation member. Today, Metro Vancouver stewards a regional park system that consists of 13,632 hectares and 23 regional parks, five greenways, two ecological conservancy areas, and two regional park reserves, with a goal to add more park land to ensure more nature spaces can be protected to meet the needs of Metro Vancouver's growing population. [metrovanancouver.org](http://metrovanancouver.org)



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**Trevor Koot** is the CEO for two British Columbia REALTOR® associations concurrently, in addition to operating two businesses in Saskatchewan (real estate development and a fitness facility). With an innovative and entrepreneurial leadership style, drawing on extensive experience as a business owner and board director, Koot's focus is change management, while maintaining strict governance and policy structure. Facilitating leadership and governance training sessions demonstrates his interest in proper structure, while creating new technology and advocating for industry-wide change provides fuel for his entrepreneurial side. With a passion for continued learning, Koot is currently working toward his MBA at Royal Roads University. [kadrea.com](http://kadrea.com), [kar.realtor](http://kar.realtor)

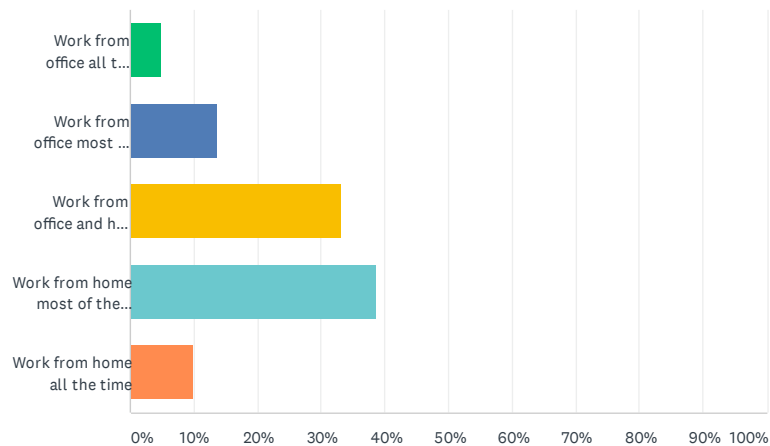


## WHERE DO YOU WANT TO WORK FROM?

With the summer in full swing now, many people are contemplating their return to the office or whether they will continue to work remotely. Our member poll in March 2021 found that a combination of home and office was preferred. We'll check again to see how these numbers look in a few months.

### Q10 When possible and given the choice will you return to work from the office or continue to work from home?

Answered: 163 Skipped: 93



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Work from office all the time	4.91%	8
Work from office most of the time	13.50%	22
Work from office and home equally	33.13%	54
Work from home most of the time	38.65%	63
Work from home all the time	9.82%	16
TOTAL		163

# TOP 10 THINGS

YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WORKING AS A REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL

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AVAILABLE AT: [www.reibc.org/white-papers](http://www.reibc.org/white-papers)









# PUSHING THE ENVELOPE OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Liam Griffin

**A**s a provider of homes for renters who are able to live independently, Brightside Community Homes Foundation approaches community development through programs and partnerships that foster community resilience and individual well-being, support families and equity-seeking groups, and enable seniors to age in place and thrive independently.

Brightside is a charitable non-profit organization that provides affordable rental homes in Vancouver. We have nearly 70 years of experience and house over 1,000 seniors, families, and people with disabilities in 26 buildings throughout Vancouver, and over 95% of the homes we provide are rented at rent-geared-to-income (30% of income) levels. Brightside envisions a future where people of all income levels have a home within a vibrant and healthy community, and it is our mission to build resilient communities, throughout Metro Vancouver, with safe and secure homes for those struggling to meet the demands of market housing.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND RESIDENT SUPPORT

Over the years, Brightside community development efforts have brought the resident community together through activities and events such as summer barbeques, fireworks viewing, community health fairs, and holiday parties. The annual winter holiday party, most recently held at a community hall before the pandemic began, is open to residents and their families and hosted free of charge. Residents from all Brightside buildings are provided with transportation when needed and greeted with entertainment, raffles, and a catered holiday meal. Social gatherings like the holiday party and the summer barbeque provide a means for residents to connect with their community and represent an important opportunity for Brightside staff to connect with residents.

Brightside's community gardens offer another venue for residents to associate with neighbours, additional to the therapeutic value hobby gardening has for many residents' well-being.

While Brightside's community development initiatives are often social in nature and help nurture community connectiveness, underlying motivations for the approach include promoting housing stability and combatting social isolation, both crucial social determinants of health for senior renters. We make it a priority to ensure that residents are equipped with the information and resources they need to be healthy and to thrive. Some support initiatives, such as Brightside's business centre pilot program, are undertaken by the organization itself. Cut short as a pandemic safety precaution, the business centre initiative was intended to provide



Brightside community gatherings, pre-pandemic.



residents access to a computer, printer, tablet, and Internet access. The program also incorporated training sessions geared toward residents that may otherwise lack the financial means or the technological ability to access these utilities on their own. A unique aspect of the planned business centre program was custom-programmed voice-assistant technology, developed to provide greater accessibility.

With the exception of select programs such as the business centre program or the community garden initiative, the majority of resident support is provided through partnerships with organizations that specialize in areas like health care, mental health and wellness, and other support services. Brightside's 2019 Annual Health Fair, for example, coordinated community health services such as Naz Wellness Group and NexGen Hearing to provide health information and hearing clinics. At the same time, community service providers such as Vancouver Public Library and Collingwood Neighbourhood House provided details on resources and programs, and the Vancouver Police Department offered a workshop on community safety. We have held health clinics with community health partners, nutrition clinics with the Greater Vancouver Food Bank, and numerous other information sessions with various neighbourhood houses throughout Vancouver.

## INFORMED INSIGHT

To gain a deeper understanding of resident needs and thereby tailor partnerships and programmatic initiatives to address gaps in overall resident well-being, Brightside

has over the past four years conducted an annual Community Enhancement Survey. Distributed to over 900 homes in all 26 buildings, the Survey has progressed from a community development-focused avenue for providing feedback into a comprehensive survey that elicits data ranging from resident demographics to health and well-being to overall satisfaction with Brightside operations and programming.

Surveys have illuminated fundamental challenges experienced by some residents and have helped shape the direction of Brightside's community development efforts and resident support initiatives. Resident needs identified in the survey have resulted in partnerships established with community-based agencies to begin delivering in-home services such as laundry, cleaning, and meal delivery.

Equally important is the information garnered from the demographic portion of the survey, which inquires about basic resident information such as age, gender, ethnicity, relationship status, and household composition. The demographic section goes further to determine information such as languages in use at home, nearby social supports, mobility requirements, and identification with equity-seeking groups and other sub-populations of interest (LGBTQ+, Indigenous, etc.).

The most recent survey, conducted in the summer of 2020, also included questions pertaining to COVID-19. The objective of this additional section was to gather data about residents' sense of community (or, alternately, their social isolation), food security, and overall satisfaction with Brightside's COVID-19 communications.





## UNPRECEDENTED CHANGE

The spring of 2020, and the public health orders that accompanied it, necessitated considerable change and innovation in the way Brightside approached community development and resident support. These changes were facilitated in large part by tried-and-tested programming, organizational research, and staff resourcefulness.

The first measures Brightside undertook were the decisions to close the office to all in-person guests and to implement an immediate work-from-home policy. Operationally, all but emergency repairs were halted across all Brightside buildings. Residents were informed of the change by means of a notice dropped at each door. Indoor amenity areas were locked in all buildings and residents were encouraged to practice physical distancing. All in-person events and gatherings were postponed indefinitely.

As the severity of the situation became apparent, Brightside established a COVID-19 Advisory Committee early in the pandemic, comprising staff and management across all departments. Tasked with establishing protocols for our resident community and for the Brightside staff and board, the Advisory Committee provided a means for us to track rapidly evolving information from media, government, and health authorities. Focused interpretation of information facilitated the development of staff and resident policies that emphasized caution and the prevention of transmission within Brightside buildings. We determined to focus initial response efforts primarily on communications aimed at ensuring residents had the information they needed to stay safe and informed.

## COMMUNICATION IS KEY

The first few weeks of the pandemic were characterized by speculation, conflicting recommendations, and confusion over where to access reliable information. The swiftness with which information was becoming available, coupled with the largely online nature of the information, presented accessibility challenges for many Brightside residents. With the majority of residents in Brightside buildings being seniors, the prospect of accessing information and resources online for many can range from daunting to inconceivable. Factoring in a growing amount of disinformation, the need for a clear and steady source of reliable information became essential.

Brightside's response was to begin distribution of a COVID-19 Brief, dropped at nearly 1,000 doors each week. Critically relevant information from key sources such as the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and the health authorities was presented in a consistent format. The brief included health and safety precautions and important updates on Brightside operations as well as publicly available resources ranging from mental health supports to senior-abuse prevention. Regular features included home-based exercise activities, easy and affordable recipes, word puzzles and games, and introductions to newly hired staff. Special editions included staff-generated content such as a do-it-yourself face mask design and a "self-isolation door hanger."

## THE IMPACT

The impact of the pandemic has been far reaching and has brought to the surface challenges both predictable

# Hey Neighbour!



## I'm Self-Isolating

I am doing my part to protect myself and others in my community by self-isolating inside my home. This means I am also practicing "physical distancing."



Please keep a respectful distance of at least 6 feet, and be understanding if I don't engage you in the corridor.



**Practice social distancing,  
wash your hands often,  
and stay safe.**

and unexpected for residents and staff alike. At a fundamental level, pandemic restrictions have interrupted one of the most crucial aspects of community housing, namely the in-person social cohesion that comes from programming and day-to-day social activities. Community development activities oriented around community social interaction—once a vibrant and active part of Brightside's approach to community building—have been halted entirely, and informal social gatherings within the community have been broadly discouraged. Brightside's majority senior population necessitates a further layer of caution in the interest of protecting those most vulnerable to COVID-19, but with that comes intensified social isolation. Many residents lack nearby social supports, and those that have supports have had their interactions disrupted or stopped altogether as a result of public health orders.

Brightside staff have been resourceful in adapting to the "new normal" and finding ways to prioritize the well-being of the resident community. All have likewise been affected by the pandemic in one way or another. Like those of many organizations, the majority of Brightside staff have found themselves in a position to work from home. Work conducted in-office is tightly regulated and well coordinated. Maintenance and field staff have adopted strict health and safety precautions. Social engagement, workplace celebrations, and new staff onboarding have all been relegated to the digital realm.

Despite the unprecedented nature of the pandemic that continues to challenge housing providers across the province, Brightside entered the fray armed with years of information on resident needs, relationships built with the resident community, and the support of non-profit and governmental sector partners. A dedication to bolstering the resilience of Brightside's staff and resident community was key in mitigating the social crises that accompany a global health crisis.

### MITIGATING EXTRAORDINARY HARDSHIP

With the expectation that the impact of the pandemic on residents would manifest in different ways, every Brightside COVID-19 Brief included the callout, "If you are experiencing extraordinary hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we invite you to contact our office." Brightside's intention was to create an opportunity for residents to confidentially discuss any pandemic-related challenges they may be experiencing and to leave the door open for individualized solutions that would help residents through difficult times. An early solution was to implement a flat-rate rent for any residents experiencing

Self-isolation door hanger.



loss of work as a result of the pandemic. The adjusted rent of \$550 per month was calculated based on approximately 30% of the Employment Insurance (EI) and Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) amounts. Brightside also froze the rents for all non-rent-geared-to-income residents and forwent any annual rate increase.

As has become apparent over past months, financial hardship is only one factor challenging individuals in every community. Considerable limitations on activities that promote community interaction has meant many suffer the ill-effects of social isolation and community disconnectedness. Limited to physically distanced outdoor activity, community gardens have presented one avenue of activity and social connection for some Brightside residents. While in-suite maintenance and community development activities were on pause, Brightside field staff took the opportunity to build additional garden boxes at a number of Brightside buildings. Community gardens have, for many residents, provided a means of social connectedness.

## TOGETHER, APART

Brightside's efforts to respond to the slings and arrows of the pandemic have evolved over the course of the past many months, slowly progressing from reaction to innovation. While in-person activity is drastically limited, efforts are no longer oriented around triaging crises and have begun now to focus on proactive planning and testing new ways of improving community connection. Partnerships have informed Brightside's response and contributed greatly to organizational capacity.

The Brightside resident community has demonstrated tremendous resilience. And the Brightside team continues to push forward with new ways to strengthen community connection, even when working from their dining room tables.

As of May 2021, isolated incidences notwithstanding, there have been no known outbreaks of COVID-19 in Brightside buildings.

*Photos and images provided by Brightside.*

RI

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Since 1988, the Real Estate Foundation of BC has granted more than \$90 million for non-profit projects that advance sustainable land use and real estate practices in BC.



[refbc.com](http://refbc.com)

# CHALLENGES WITH STRATA GOVERNANCE DURING THE PANDEMIC

Oscar Miklos





In early March 2020, news of the global spread of the novel coronavirus began dominating the airwaves. By March 12, the Province imposed a two-week self-isolation period for all international arrivals and strongly recommended against any non-essential travel outside BC. The following week, on March 16, the provincial health authorities imposed a ban on all events with more than fifty people to curb the spread of the virus. A couple of days later, BC declared a state of emergency—a declaration which was renewed over two dozen times.

It became increasingly clear to strata corporations in BC that it was no longer going to be “business as usual.” Strata property managers who had, until that point, run their general meetings in community rooms or town halls packed with owners were frantically wondering whether they could delay their meetings or hold them electronically. Moreover, while the science behind the transmission of the virus was still being researched, strata council members were wondering what precautions they needed to take to protect the health of residents. In short, strata corporations were left to deal with numerous unanticipated and unwelcome challenges because of the pandemic.

## USE AND MAINTENANCE OF COMMON AREAS AND AMENITIES

Section 72 of the *Strata Property Act* (Act) requires strata corporations to repair and maintain common property and common assets. The usage of common areas of a building, such as elevators, hallways, lobbies, and stairwells, poses a transmission risk for residents. Strata councils have had to be proactive in ensuring that common areas are regularly cleaned, often increasing the frequency of the cleaning of high-use and high-touch areas from their janitorial service providers. Some strata councils have taken additional measures, such as installing hand sanitizers in common areas.

While there was mixed messaging regarding the use of masks during the early stages of the pandemic, social distancing was widely promoted as a preventative measure. To date, residents should be encouraged to respect social distancing guidelines by maintaining a two-metre distance from one another where possible. By the same token, confined common areas such as elevators should be limited to a reasonable number of people, depending

on the size of the elevator in question and the total number of elevators in the building.

As scientists learned more about how humans transmit COVID-19, the messaging regarding masks evolved. In November 2020, the provincial government instituted an official mask mandate, requiring everyone in public indoor settings to wear masks. While strata buildings qualify as private (i.e., not public) spaces, it is nevertheless strongly advisable to ensure that masks be worn by residents when passing through common areas. Strata corporations can enforce compliance by adopting a rule (by a majority vote of the strata council) as set out at section 125 of the Act.

Finally, while not a legal requirement, many strata corporations decided to shut down non-essential amenities until further notice, such as guest suites, gyms, pools, saunas, steam rooms, outdoor playgrounds, and recreation rooms. However, as the number of active COVID-19 cases decreases in the province due to increased vaccination, many strata corporations are gradually reopening at least some of these same amenities. In doing so, strata corporations can draw inspiration from guidelines published by WorkSafeBC. For example:

- Establish occupancy limits to ensure that residents can comfortably maintain physical distance during their use of the amenities
- Implement booking/scheduling systems to ensure that only a reasonable number of residents are using the amenities at a given time
- Establish a policy to screen residents for symptoms of COVID-19 and put up signs to ask them not to enter if they are exhibiting symptoms
- Install hand sanitizers for use upon entry into and exit from recreational areas
- Provide disposable cleaning supplies to allow users to clean equipment before and after each use and have a visible waste disposal bin to allow users to easily discard such disposable cleaning supplies
- Ensure that any exercise equipment is located at minimum two meters apart

## DISCLOSURE OF COVID-19 INFECTIONS

Among the most common questions asked by strata councils and property managers since the beginning of the pandemic is whether a strata corporation has an obligation to report an active infection in a building once the strata council is made aware of its occurrence.

While strata corporations should notify residents of active infections in the building to allow them to take further precautions, strata corporations must always keep in mind their legal obligation to protect personal information. Practically speaking, this means that information such as the name, floor, and unit number of an affected resident should not be disclosed by the strata corporation to others unless the resident in question explicitly agrees to be identified. Concerned strata councils should keep in mind that provincial health authorities will conduct contact tracing and notify any other residents who may have been exposed.

## ELECTRONIC AND “RESTRICTED” PROXY MEETINGS

As of May 2021, BC continues to impose limits on gatherings that are even more restrictive than the original limit instituted in March 2020. These restrictions on gatherings create ongoing challenges for a large majority of strata corporations who, prior to the pandemic, held their meetings in person with some owners attending by proxy.

Strata council meetings have been far less problematic during the pandemic as they typically involve far fewer participants than a general meeting of owners, and the Schedule of Standard Bylaws (as set out in the Act) already allows such meetings to proceed electronically so long as “all council members and other participants can communicate with each other.”

However, particularly at the beginning of the pandemic, strata corporations struggled to adapt to changing circumstances as the Standard Bylaws do not allow for annual and special general meetings to be held by electronic means. Moreover, even where a strata corporation already had a bylaw in place that allowed their general meetings to be held electronically, many strata councils and strata property managers were ill-equipped and ill-trained to conduct such meetings using video-conferencing technologies like Zoom, Go To Meeting, and Microsoft Teams. These strata corporations were stuck attempting to replicate procedures that are otherwise

more easily achievable in person (voter registration, secret balloting, etc.).

Fortunately, on April 15, 2020, the Province made a Ministerial Order under the *Emergency Program Act* to allow all strata corporations to hold their general meetings by electronic means regardless of whether they had previously passed a bylaw allowing them to do so. Furthermore, while there was a steep learning curve, strata councils and property managers proved adept at implementing video-conferencing, allowing them to carry on their business throughout the pandemic.

Finally, many strata corporations also resorted to other alternative methods of holding their general meetings, such as written waiver and consent resolutions and so-called “restricted” proxies. With restricted proxies, it is important to note that while strata corporations cannot force an eligible voter to issue a proxy, the rationale behind such method is that most owners will agree to complete a restricted proxy form indicating their voting intentions for each resolution rather than choosing to attend the meeting in person. The restricted proxy forms will designate one owner (often a council member) who will attend the meeting in place of many owners, thereby allowing the strata corporation to greatly reduce the number of people in attendance at the general meeting.

Notably, restricted proxy forms are not ballots per se, and a strata corporation must still go through the regular procedure of holding a meeting in accordance with its bylaws and having proxy-holders vote on each resolution at the meeting, even if, practically speaking, a large part of the meeting will involve reviewing and tabulating results based on the restricted proxy forms received. Moreover, because restricted proxy meetings largely eliminate discussions and debates between owners, even if a strata corporation does not intend to conduct the general meeting itself by electronic means, it is advisable that it hold an informational meeting a few weeks in advance of the general meeting to allow for discussion between owners so as to ensure that voters feel that they are making an informed decision prior to completing their restricted proxy form.

## RESOLUTION OF STRATA PROPERTY DISPUTES

Thanks to the existence of the Civil Resolution Tribunal (CRT), one of the least affected areas of strata governance during the pandemic has been in respect to the resolution of strata property disputes. While the



Province's court systems largely ground to a halt before eventually undergoing some very necessary procedural changes to start running again during the pandemic, at its inception, the CRT was designed as an online dispute resolution system. Therefore, while there may have been a slight drop off in the number of owners willing to file a claim with the CRT due to the initial shock of the pandemic back in March 2020, any cases that were already filed with the CRT proceeded as normal and it was not long until new claims were filed with the CRT's strata property claims division, including some claims concerning strata governance during the pandemic.

### KEY PANDEMIC LESSONS

There is little doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic left an indelible mark on BC's strata corporations. While it is safe to say that most of us are hoping for a return-to-normal very soon, as with other changes brought on by the pandemic in areas of life, such as employment, it is likely that strata governance in a post-pandemic world will likely retain at least some of the adaptations that were made necessary by the pandemic.

As such, among other changes, we can likely expect to see greater implementation of video-conference technology by strata corporations for general meetings to boost attendance even if such meetings are once again held in person in community rooms and town halls. It should be noted that the Ministerial Order regarding electronic meetings came to an end on July 10, 2021.

More importantly, we can hope that the pandemic has served as a not-so-subtle reminder of how interdependent we are as human beings—a particularly important lesson for those who live in multifamily residential developments.

*Photo from flickr/izusek.*



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# ON THE JOB



## ROD FRAM, RI

**OWNER AND PRESIDENT  
TRANSPACIFIC REALTY  
ADVISORS**



### WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL ROLE?

Transpacific Realty Advisors is a mid-size property management company that provides full-service commercial and residential rental management across Metro Vancouver. As the owner and president, my primary role is to set the direction and culture of the company, do the strategic planning and marketing, respond to business opportunities, and help to maintain client relationships.

But as any business owner knows, the responsibilities don't end there. The pandemic is a case in point. During the first year, I worked long days alongside my team, advising worried clients, working with tenants, and picking up portfolios when staff were absent, in addition to forming our own response to the situation—for example, finding 30 laptops so that office staff could work from home.

### HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR DAY?

I spend a lot of time in meetings with my executive leadership team and with clients, handling day-to-day issues and planning for the future. I work as part of the team, overseeing the leasing, financing, and maintenance of our clients' assets, and I handle any problems that get pushed up the line. I'm also in charge of the company's operations and growth, and on any given day I look at issues related to marketing, business development, staff training and education, risk management, cybersecurity, data protection, and new technology and systems.

### WHAT PREPARED YOU FOR THIS ROLE?

A combination of education, experience, and personality. Over a period of 17 years, I worked my way up to general manager at one of the well-known global property

management companies, but when they offered me a vice-president position, I realized it didn't excite me. I was an entrepreneur at heart—I wanted to work directly with clients and help them grow their businesses. The global firm gave me invaluable "big picture" training as well as specific experience in all of the frontline jobs. I continue to invest in my education with management and leadership courses.

### WHAT DO YOU FIND CHALLENGING ABOUT YOUR WORK?

Our industry is in a constant state of change. We're always adjusting for the economy, government regulations, and new issues such as the pandemic, rent freezes, or marijuana legalization. It affects not only our owners and the advice we give them, but where our business opportunities lie. On top of that, we have to keep pace with the evolving technologies that affect our operations, security, and service offerings.

### WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT YOUR WORK?

I enjoy working with and helping my clients. It's intensely satisfying to be trusted with their multi-million dollar assets and to help them with advice on everything from leasing to managing their family holdings.

### ARE THERE COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT THE WORK YOU DO?

Many people assume that if you're in property management, you're a condo manager. But although it's in the same industry, it's a completely different animal from commercial or residential rental management.

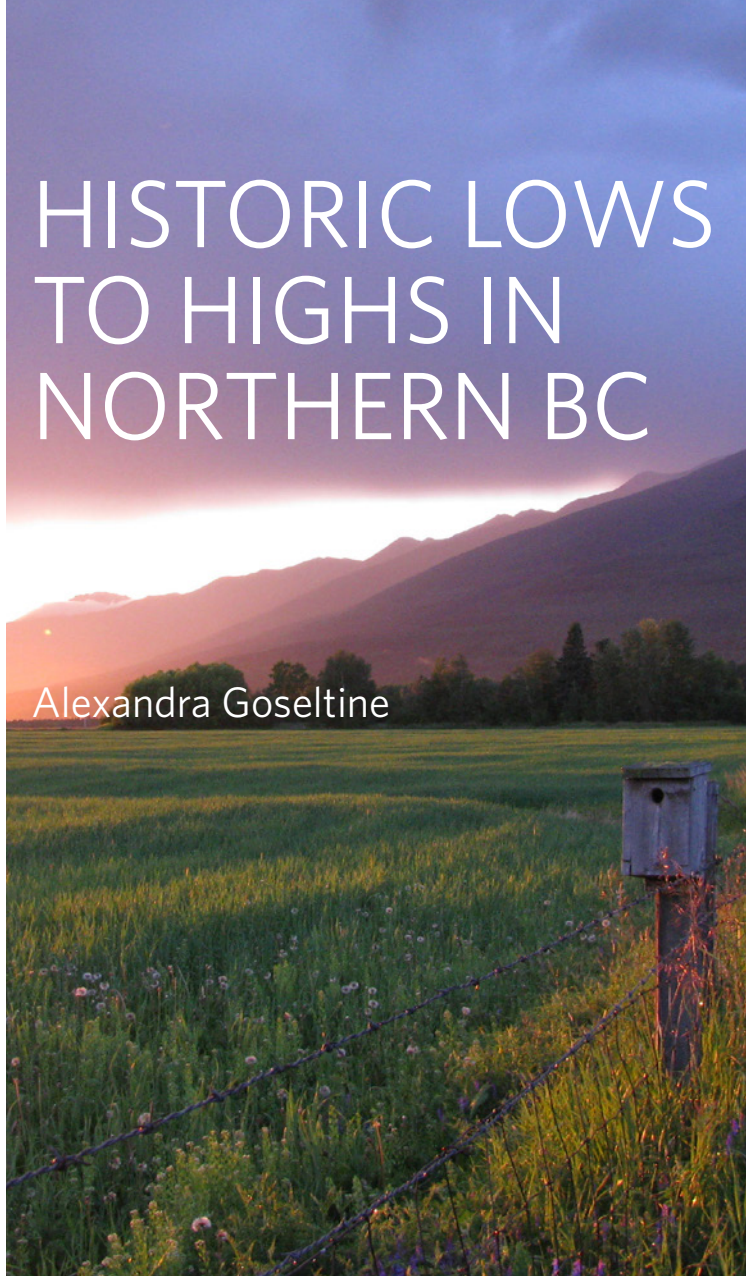
### WHAT GOALS ARE YOU WORKING TOWARD?

I am working toward building a solid executive leadership team that is able to fully manage the business in my absence.



# HISTORIC LOWS TO HIGHS IN NORTHERN BC

Alexandra Goseltine



activity followed by a dramatic rebound in sales. Low mortgage rates, pent-up demand, and other factors helped move the housing markets from historic lows to historic highs. While BC Northern's sales did not show the size of increase seen in other areas of BC, MLS sales in BC Northern finished 2020 at 4% higher than in 2019, with average MLS prices 7% higher than in the previous year.

A higher number of sales, lower inventory, and rising prices have continued into the start of 2021. The MLS average price for the BC Northern Real Estate Board increased 22% year over year in the first quarter to \$361,102 and has continued to rise. Sales were up 21% from the fourth quarter of 2020 on a seasonally adjusted basis. Recently, there has been a surge in listings going on the MLS system, which will hopefully lead to a higher level of active listings and a move towards a more balanced market.

Anecdotally, many realtors are reporting a higher-than-average number of buyers from the Lower Mainland and Ontario. These buyers are looking north for less expensive housing options, recreational property, or investment opportunities. In smaller communities, some buyers are taking advantage of the work-from-home boom to purchase larger properties outside of urban areas. Locally, realtors are seeing buyers who do not wish to travel upsizing into homes with larger lots, hot tubs, patios, and other amenities to create the perfect staycation home.

One positive effect that will outlive the pandemic is the real estate sector's move to virtual spaces. By March of 2020, realtors had incorporated strict policies and guidelines in their day-to-day practice to ensure the health and safety of their clients. Realtors also accelerated the implementation of virtual technologies and adopted creative COVID-safe methods for marketing and showing properties. While real estate is usually seen as a face-to-face business, there is no doubt that the skills learned and services provided during the pandemic will continue to allow out-of-town buyers to preview homes before purchase or for in-town buyers to focus their searches.

*Photo by flickr/Province of BC.*

**T**he BC Northern Real Estate Board (BC Northern) is a REALTOR® association of more than 380 members that serve the needs of very diverse communities, from Fort Nelson in the north to 100 Mile House in the south, and from the Alberta border in the east to Haida Gwaii in the west.

The BC Northern housing market for 2020 began as forecasted with a slight dip in sales year over year but remained balanced overall. This business-as-usual market continued until the pandemic hit and activity in the real estate sector virtually ceased. April's sales were down 53.8% from 2019.

After the initial slump in sales, the BC Government's declaration on March 26, 2020, that real estate is an essential service saw an initial slow return to normal

RI

# ADVOCATES FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Teri Smith

To suggest the past year and a half has been a difficult period for business owners in communities across this province is a massive understatement. It's been a rollercoaster ride of ups and downs, with hopeful signals giving way to disappointment as we moved through wave one, wave two and, ultimately, wave three of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The role of business improvement areas, or BIAs, in helping to support businesses in downtowns, commercial areas, and on main streets during this difficult period is one that many people may not be aware of—but to be sure, BIAs have proven to be advocates, sources of information and encouragement, and beyond that, partners in the truest sense of the word.

Business Improvement Areas of BC (BIABC) is a non-profit umbrella organization that represents more than 70 business districts across BC. BIAs have a long history and have served an important function in an effective but understated manner and, as a result, their efforts have historically been overshadowed by other business organizations—until now.

## DOWNTOWN LANGLEY

Teri James has been the executive director of the Downtown Langley Business Association for 21 years and says the past year and a half has been a “tragedy” because of the extreme financial and emotional toll it has placed on business owners and employees.

When the impact of the pandemic started to become apparent, James says the first order of business was to contact every one of its 600 members to lend support. A heightened level of collaboration resulted in “reinvented”

events, such as “pickup picnics” that coupled food items with a map of parks in the city where individuals or families could enjoy a dining experience outdoors.

Downtown Dollars was a well-established concept prior to the pandemic to redirect big-box gift cards and to support the local business community. However, the campaign took on a whole new meaning during the pandemic, as more than 100 businesses signed up and benefitted to the tune of \$42,000—a 97% user rate.

The association worked with a very supportive city administration to relax rules and facilitate outdoor patios. It also partnered with local tech companies that, at no cost, supported businesses by helping them establish or enhance an online presence. For some it has led to “smokin’” results, which have helped redefine some business models.

## DOWNTOWN PRINCE GEORGE

When the pandemic struck, its impact on the 400 members of Downtown Prince George was “immediate and significant,” says the BIA’s executive director Colleen Van Mook.

Downtown Prince George proceeded to create a micro-grant program that provided businesses up to \$500 so they could reimagine their business models by adding plexiglass or additional tables and create outdoor dining areas. An e-commerce grant was established to help with additional costs that businesses might incur for signage or to develop or enhance their online presence.

The traditional Downtown Summerfest, which would typically draw the public to the downtown core, became





Downtown Summer – Take It Home to encourage people to support their local eateries but enjoy those meals in their own backyards.

Van Mook says advocacy has always been a function of the BIA but never in the manner it has been over the past year and half. She is also quick to add how important it has been that a number of supporting organizations have shared a collective voice through *SupportPG.ca*, a collaborative effort involving a number of partner organizations that both support and speak on behalf of local businesses.

## DOWNTOWN VICTORIA

For the Downtown Victoria Business Association, the onset of the pandemic was in many respects a perfect storm for more than 1,350 members. Executive director Jeff Bray says tourists who frequented the downtown



core largely disappeared, there were no events to draw people to the area, and many office workers who would regularly enjoy meals or coffee in local establishments started working from home.

Bray says the association took on an increased advocacy role and worked with the City of Victoria, the local Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations to ensure there was a united, consistent, and collective voice to represent business on matters that initially involved critical wage and rent subsidy programs.

The association has employed a number of outreach and marketing efforts, each of which include a call to action.

The Save the Sales campaign is one that Bray will be the first to admit is “cheesy” but that was the intent, as a means of getting the public’s attention. Through the 1980s-influenced promotion with retro-based imagery and graphics, consumers were challenged to register, submit proof of purchase from an eligible business, and be entered to win the value of that purchase, up to \$100. The campaign recorded more than \$336,000 in registered purchases.

The Meet Downtown campaign struck a very personal and emotional chord with consumers. Through a series of vignettes, business owners told their personal stories, explaining how they were working their way through the pandemic, how they have redefined their business model, or how, in one case, a restaurant owner had taken on a full-time position in a larger retail establishment to make ends meet and keep her business alive.

## DOWNTOWN SURREY

The Downtown Surrey BIA, which represents close to 1,500 members, recognized early in the pandemic that there was no one-size-fits-all solution, says CEO Elizabeth Model. As a result, the BIA created a series of campaigns rolled out in collaboration with the business community to encourage the “shop local” message and provide businesses the consumer support they have required.

The BIA found early on that independent and family-owned businesses required help in establishing or refining an online presence to meet the new reality. The Click on Surrey program was born, through which 19 enthusiastic students, hired through the federal summer jobs grant, provided one-on-one assistance in activating or enhancing the online marketing presence of businesses.

An important aspect of strategic planning has involved “building in flexibility” to address the evolving nature of the pandemic and the shifting health orders and protocols experienced by different members of the business community. Another important component has involved keeping abreast of what other BIAs and business organizations in other jurisdictions are doing to develop strategies that may resonate locally.

## DOWNTOWN WILLIAMS LAKE

Sherry Yonkman, executive director of the Downtown Williams Lake BIA, says there have been two key elements involved in supporting 300 member businesses. The first was to ensure they were receiving timely, accurate information, and the second was for the BIA to think outside of the box and be as creative as possible.

Because customers were in some cases reluctant to enter retail locations, the BIA created the Business Portrait Project through which caricatures of business owners and staff were painted on storefront windows so shoppers would see friendly faces in the storefronts.



They followed that with a COVID-safe scavenger hunt that made the local population more aware of the various retail stores in the downtown.

The past year and half has proven to be difficult, but the most positive aspect, says Yonkman, is the extent to which businesses have supported each other because they recognize it's a fight that they are all in together.

## HASTINGS NORTH

The Hastings North BIA in East Vancouver is eclectic and includes a mix of cool, unique craft breweries, restaurants, and tattoo parlors along with an ethnic mix of bakeries and restaurants.

When asked whether the community bought into the “shop local” focus, executive director Patricia Barnes is quick to underline, “They got it.” Still, the impact of the pandemic has been significant on the many restaurants that serve as traditional gathering places in local neighborhoods. The worst aspect of the pandemic, she adds, is the heartbreaking situation involving business owners having to lay off staff who in many cases are, in a sense, part of their extended family.

However, Barnes also suggests that if there is a positive, it's that the concept of a neighbourhood may be stronger now than at any point in recent memory—along with a stronger sense of loyalty from families and residential and commercial businesses to support each other.





Mural by Carson Ting. Photo by Gabriel Martinez.

## DOWNTOWN KELOWNA

Executive director Mark Burley of the Downtown Kelowna Association says the 1,200 businesses that make up the city's core is a varied mix, but one thing they have all required from the outset is timely and regular updates.

Burley says there was limited reaction to information distributed throughout the BIA pre-COVID, but businesses recognized the need to be as knowledgeable as possible about the changing circumstances. Regular updates resulted in more feedback, "good and bad," which he welcomed because it creates "more conversation, and in most cases, better results."

The association developed and participated in a series of campaigns and approaches to encourage consumers to shop in the downtown core. It also created an e-commerce directory to better inform consumers about where and how to find their favourite goods or services. And because Kelowna is home to a robust tech community, there were many examples of businesses creating new revenue streams through online sales—some in the manner of Shopify.

Burley says this continues to be a stressful period because of the constant nature of change. However, he says if there is one positive aspect to the pandemic, it's the fact that the situation has forced all of us to have less resistance to new ideas.

## COMING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS

The past year and a half has been a very difficult period, but I am thankful that the BIA community has come together in the manner it has, demonstrating a caring, thoughtful, and collaborative approach.

Through a provincial gift card campaign called Support Local, more than a million gift cards have been sold (at the time of this writing) directly benefitting some 1,700 businesses in 109 communities across BC.

In Vancouver, a coalition of 22 BIAs delivered a series of campaigns, just a few of which included: Take Out to Help Out, a simple and effective way to support local eateries; Open with Care, a neighbourhood re-opening campaign aimed at building back consumer confidence through coordinated messaging, translated materials, and tool kits (widely adopted across the country); and Gift Big Shop Small, a successful holiday campaign that encouraged consumers to shop in their local neighbourhood and support local businesses.

Another very important initiative that occurred in Vancouver was prompted by the stark reality of businesses boarding up along main streets as the pandemic first emerged. Through Vancouver Mural Festival, in partnership with the Robson Street, Downtown Vancouver, and South Granville BIAs, 60 temporary murals were painted on storefronts by local artists, communicating messages and images of love, gratitude, and hope. It demonstrated how public art can play a key role in connecting and healing people and fostering community resilience.

I am going to leave the closing words to Elizabeth Model of Downtown Surrey BIA, who makes two points that I hope readers will allow to sink in.

"The pandemic has had a significant impact on businesses and livelihoods, but we shouldn't discount the emotional toll of the pandemic. We all need to take care of our physical and mental well-being, and that means reaching out for help when we need someone to talk to and maintaining contact with those who may be particularly isolated or vulnerable," says Model. "However, if there is a silver lining that comes from this experience, we can all hope that it will be a better appreciation for the human and social connections, that, prior to COVID, many of us had taken for granted."

*Photos provided by BIABC.*



# THE REMARKABLE RESILIENCE OF FRASER VALLEY REALTORS

Baldev Gill

If someone had told me when I took the helm of the Fraser Valley Real Estate Board (FVREB) in late 2018 what was on the horizon a mere 16 months later, I would have been greatly concerned about the ability of the industry to adapt and the length of time necessary to do so.

Real estate, after all, at its core, is about establishing relationships and trust in a largely face-to-face setting. FVREB members have been guiding, advising, and protecting buyers and sellers for 100 years.

I needn't have worried. I hadn't yet seen the remarkable resilience and adaptability of realtors and their clients. The pandemic has proven that trust isn't a matter of physical distance but, rather, is established through duty, action, and results.

With real estate deemed a non-health essential service, realtors, and those of us who serve them, had to pivot—and fast. Working with the BC Real Estate Association, the Real Estate Council of BC, and WorkSafeBC, our industry quickly developed protocols that would allow realtors to continue to help people buy and sell their homes while keeping all parties safe. Compared to other industries, the implementation of the public health protocols wasn't as challenging for our members. Real estate was already “primed” as realtors have been relying on technology to serve their clients—virtual tours, FaceTime, electronic signatures, and so on—for years.

We communicated extensively to our members about WorkSafeBC's safety protocols at in-home private showings and our industry put a stop to traditional open houses. Amazingly, FVREB didn't lose a single day in the process as our staff pivoted to working remotely to serve members: we were offering professional development courses via Zoom on day one of the lockdown. Within weeks, we'd upgraded technology to allow members to double their listing photos from 20 to 40 on *realtor.ca*, Canada's most successful home marketing site, and members quickly learned to augment their listings with additional visual aids: floorplans, feature sheets, virtual tours, and 3D tours. In short: realtors sharpened their technical prowess and got on with business.

We all understood and respected the gravity of the situation and were motivated by the greater good.

When the lockdown first hit, it was a shock to the market. Property sales in the Fraser Valley in April 2020 dropped by 50% and new listings plummeted by almost 60% compared to April 2019. Evidently, consumers appreciated and trusted how our industry led the way on pandemic safety and by June 2020 the housing market had already rebounded—and by year's end, after four months of record-breaking housing sales, would become a critical pillar supporting BC's economic recovery.

In April 2021, our region hit eight consecutive months of record-breaking sales amid a global health crisis, proving two things: the indispensable, societal value of home ownership and the invaluable worth of the professional REALTOR® who guides, advises, and protects home buyers and sellers in one of life's most pivotal decisions.

*Photo by flickr/Province of BC.*



# NEW GOVERNOR 2021-2023



## TINA LEE, RI

**OWNER AND PRESIDENT  
LEEMORE & ASSOCIATES  
REAL ESTATE APPRAISERS  
& CONSULTANTS LTD.**

Tina Lee began her career in real estate over 30 years ago. She is currently a designated CRA appraiser with the Appraisal Institute of Canada, an associate member of the Greater Vancouver Real Estate Board, and an RI since 1998. Tina has been an active member with REIBC's North Fraser Chapter since she joined—holding the roles of director, treasurer, chair, and governor. In addition to serving on the Board of REIBC, Tina serves as the secretary of the Business Association of Real Estate Appraisers and on the board of governors of a junior kindergarten to Grade 12 International Baccalaureate school.

Tina believes that volunteerism is about building community and setting an example that encourages others to participate and share their skills and knowledge for the growth and expansion of the organization. Tina hopes to use her skills and experience as an appraiser to help support the growth and organization of the Institute.

In her downtime, Tina spends time with her two kids and can often be found at the hockey rink.

## AGM 2021

REIBC held the Annual General Meeting on June 10, 2021. This meeting was held virtually for a second year in a row to undertake the business of the Institute. It was an efficient meeting with polls being done for voting. We look forward to seeing everyone in person next year.

Six districts could have held elections this year; all Governors were acclaimed:

- Vancouver – Edwin Yan, Clayton Olson
- Vancouver Island – Jon Burbee, Cindy Nesselbeck

### OUR MISSION

To promote our diverse RI designated members as distinguished professionals that are trusted, educated, and experienced.



### OUR VISION

We will be the respected and trusted leader in the real estate sector through:

- elevating the value and recognition of the RI designation
- promoting excellence in real estate through professional development
- anticipating trends to be responsive to our members
- being a recognized contributor to the real estate body of knowledge
- developing and maintaining strategic partnerships

### OUR VALUES

**Integrity:** trustworthy professionals who are honest, reliable, respectful and always above reproach

**Expertise:** continuous improvement of the depth and breadth of the knowledge of our members

**Diversity:** professional, cultural and geographic

**Transparency:** proactive, open and honest communication

**Community:** collaborative mindset that fosters interaction, growth and increased professional expertise

(Jon is elected for a one-year term so that both Governors will not be elected in the same year moving forward)

- Kootenay – Sean McGinnis
- Cariboo / Northwest / Prince Rupert – Geoffrey Radtke
- North Fraser – Tina Lee
- Thompson/Okanagan – Mona Murray











# PLACES FOR PEOPLE

Heather Turner and Mike Hunter

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been significant on communities, businesses, government, agencies, institutions, families, and individuals. This was certainly the experience of the City of North Vancouver and the North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission. Our practices to be healthy, connected, and thriving were turned upside down in mid-March 2020 when many venues closed and we were all encouraged to stay home as much as possible to reduce risk to ourselves and others.

For municipalities, this meant closing municipal halls, libraries, community recreation centres, event centres and, for a while, playgrounds and playing fields. These normally busy places were very suddenly closed to residents, wreaking havoc on normal routines for play, learning, exercise, relaxing, working, and connecting. Thankfully, BC residents were strongly encouraged to get outside, and our beautiful trails, parks, and pathways provided opportunities to sustain and improve physical and mental health. The utilization of these outdoor amenities increased to all-time-high numbers, which created challenges given the directives for physical distancing and the demands on parking and trail use.

## TAKING COMMUNITY PROGRAMS OUTSIDE

Like most municipal entities, when recreation, sport, and community facilities closed in North Vancouver in mid-March 2020, the North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission was faced with a great number of customer inquiries and refunds, significant layoffs, and a lot of uncertainty about the remainder of the year.

Indoor facilities were closed for six months. These facilities are places where residents come to connect with others, learn new skills, create, explore, play, exercise, train, perform, and compete. They are hubs for individuals of all ages and abilities, making them important





components of community life. The closure of these critical community venues, along with libraries, with no sense of when and how they would reopen, impacted residents greatly. The financial impact was significant as well: revenues were more than \$8.6 million lower than budgeted, which we mitigated by reducing spending in all areas and laying off or reducing hours of work for approximately 700 employees.

To fulfill our mandate, we needed to be even more creative than usual. How could we support our residents to have some outlets for recreation and culture and to connect with others safely when our centres were closed? From the beginning, we determined that we would make every effort to provide as many services and programs as we could within the provincial health orders without putting residents or staff at risk.

Without having our indoor facilities to utilize, we turned to outdoor public spaces. As spring approached, with more daylight and better weather, the Provincial Health Officer continuously encouraged residents to spend time outdoors, and staff explored opportunities for both organized and informal outdoor recreation. Thankfully, we were able to reopen playgrounds and playing fields in mid-June 2020 and these venues, along with parks and plazas, afforded us with viable options.





We shifted our attention to parks and plazas as potential program venues, and our amazing programming staff quickly mobilized to offer a wide range of dance, fitness, art, and play-based programs. This may sound simple, but it wasn't, as all of the site safety protocols needed for indoors were also required outdoors and most of these venues did not have adjacent storage facilities, washrooms, or covers for rain. These challenges required creative use of other park buildings; purchase of tents; redeployment of staff to register, inform, and ensure distancing of participants; and a great deal of new signage. Our residents had access to options such as yoga on a pier, boot camp in a park, drawing in a forest, and Zumba in a plaza. Almost immediately upon opening these programs for registration, they were fully booked, many with wait lists. The success of these programs outdoors resulted in us doing the same in 2021 and likely in years to come.

## CREATING MORE ROOM FOR PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES

While it's important to suppress the transmission of COVID-19, it's also important to get people back to work, support the economy, and support local families and our community. That includes enhancing opportunities for residents and businesses to get outside in order to

promote safety and a healthy lifestyle that works within evolving pandemic restrictions.

Following the launch of the Province of BC's Restart Plan in May 2020, our city council endorsed a COVID-19 adaptation and recovery framework that outlined municipal actions and efforts to respond to the pandemic. Actions by the City of North Vancouver to support economic and community recovery have included a number of complementary initiatives to create more space for business operations, add vibrancy, and attract people to the commercial areas and public spaces. These have included transforming streets into vibrant public spaces, piloting a program to allow the responsible consumption of alcohol in parks, expanding the patio dining program, adding parklets and other public space activations in Central and Lower Lonsdale business districts, and providing more opportunities for businesses to use parks to help deliver their services.

Parks and public spaces became busier than ever and, like many municipalities, we established a Park Ambassador program, where City staff were visibly present to help educate the public about the new safety guidelines and the need for physical distancing. With organized sports on hold, community sports fields were repurposed as casual open space, providing more room for people to be outside. Additional picnic tables, portable washrooms, and more garbage and recycling





receptacles were added as more and more residents took the opportunity explore and utilize our park system.

To help make life a little easier during COVID-19 and to encourage residents to use public spaces as extensions of their own backyards, the City of North Vancouver became the first municipality in the province to allow the responsible consumption of alcohol in designated outdoor areas in parks and plazas. An initial pilot project received overwhelming support from both residents and businesses, and city council approved making the initiative permanent in November 2020.

With restrictions on physical distancing, many small businesses in the health and fitness sector expressed concerns about not being able to operate. In response, we created a permit process to allow these companies to book areas in parks to provide them with sufficient space to safely provide some of their services. We also relaxed the rules whereby restaurants, pubs, and other businesses could create outdoor dining patio space along city streets and sidewalks.

In order to create more space on streets and sidewalks, we developed an Open Streets Action Plan that encourages safe walking, cycling, and business operations. By reallocating some of the existing road space in key areas, we've provided improved access to businesses while supporting the health and safety of residents with more space for physical distancing. A good example of this is Lonsdale Avenue between 13th Street and 18th Street, a busy commercial hub at the heart of the city. In this stretch, the street has been narrowed to two travel lanes (one in each direction), with a parking/loading zone on both sides, an expanded sidewalk, and seating/waiting areas in the previous parking lane. The expanded sidewalk area offers flexible pedestrian-orientated space designed to support the needs of local shops, cafes, and restaurants. In some sections additional covered seating is available. In other locations there are waiting areas so that queues to enter popular destinations do not obstruct the sidewalk.

Another example of the Open Streets initiative is West Grand Boulevard between East Keith Road and East 19th Street where the northbound lane has been closed to





vehicles, allowing cyclists to travel along the roadway rather than along the pathways in Grand Boulevard Park. This change provides a more comfortable experience for cyclists while maintaining vehicle access for neighbouring residents, and it allows more physical distancing space for pedestrians on the popular park paths.

With the expanded streetscapes created by the Open Streets initiative, parklets and other forms of street-level activations were implemented to enhance the public realm and support community recovery efforts. Parklets create vibrant people spaces that support local businesses, their patrons, and the community. Parklets differ from other patio expansions in that they are not tied to one business and are created, owned, and stewarded by the City; they are public spaces and cannot be used for private table service or advertising.

Other public space activations within Open Streets include creative planters, street seats, street art, window murals, music, and programming. This effort has helped attract people to commercial areas to support business recovery and reduce social isolation by creating engaging

outdoor spaces to connect. Community partnerships have formed to support parklet development as part of recovery efforts.

The efforts of the City of North Vancouver and the North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission have supported individuals, families, and businesses to utilize the outdoors in new ways. While many of the initiatives were in response to the pandemic and related closures and restrictions, feedback from residents and businesses has been very positive and the best practices will continue post-pandemic.

*Photos provided by City of North Vancouver.*

**RI**

# MEMBER PROFILE

## ZOHEB AHMED, RI

**PROPERTY VALUATOR,  
NEGOTIATOR 2**  
CITY OF BURNABY



Photo provided by Zoheb Ahmed.



Zoheb Ahmed recently joined the Realty and Lands team at City of Burnaby, responsible for providing real estate services to city council and other departments on matters affecting Burnaby citizens and other stakeholders. "My role involves completing strategic acquisitions, dispositions, and conducting valuation of all property types, including lease rates, interests, and rights granted through different agreements," explains Zoheb. The role is also responsible for the valuation and negotiation of community amenity density bonus values.

Starting out in appraisal and valuation, Zoheb worked on both the public and private side of the industry. The experience helped him develop a strong foundation and understanding about value, and how each component of a property translates into value. "I feel this experience and training has benefited me throughout my career," he says.

During his career so far, Zoheb has worked in several different roles in the

industry and been involved in a number of large transactions. While working on the investment management side of the industry, for example, he was involved with acquisitions of over \$100 million in Western Canada, involving retail shopping centres and industrial and office portfolios. And during his time working in local government he helped secure over \$300 million worth of benefits for the community.

"I enjoy the opportunity to use my knowledge to benefit the local community," says Zoheb.

Zoheb holds a third degree black belt in taekwondo and has also trained in other martial arts, such as hapkido, karate, and capoeira. As an adolescent he taught taekwondo and volunteered as a coach. "Now, as a father with a son getting into taekwondo, I look forward to continuing to be involved with this sport," says Zoheb. "Martial arts taught me a great deal about discipline and perseverance, and I want to help new generations learn those skills as well."

Living on the Lower Mainland's North Shore, Zoheb enjoys exploring the city with his family, doing outdoor activities and trying different cuisines. Snowboarding on the local mountains is a particular favourite.

Reflecting on the past year, Zoheb shares: "If the last year has shown us anything, it's how connected we are and how our actions impact each other. I hope, whether it's overcoming challenges like the global pandemic or climate change, that people can see that we're all in this together and that we truly have only one planet."



## ASK A LAWYER

# THE EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL LEASES

John McLachlan, RI, LLB, and Nicole K. Wong, JD

As British Columbia continues with its Restart Plan for a gradual return to normalcy with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic, we thought this would be an appropriate time to look back on the effect of the pandemic on commercial and residential leases. Both landlords and tenants were greatly affected by government orders, various lockdowns and restrictions, and loss of employment, to name just a few of the problems people dealt with over the past year.

Many people were put in difficult situations that required them to either break their leases or find other methods of weathering the storm. The following is an overview of the various programs put in place to assist those with commercial and residential tenancies who were affected and the difficulties in threading the needle between allowing continued tenancy and securing unpaid amounts of rent.

## COMMERCIAL TENANCIES

The COVID-19 pandemic was difficult for many businesses, with downturns across many sectors and various mandatory lockdown periods and restrictions. Existing rent obligations in the face of these difficulties caused concern for many tenants who lease commercial space. Landlords were also put into a difficult position where they were still responsible for operating costs even if there were no rent payments coming in.

### *Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program*

In May 2020, the federal government introduced the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program to assist commercial tenants with rent. CECRA provided forgivable loans to eligible commercial

landlords who agreed to lower or forego the rent of impacted small business tenants from April through to September 2020. These loans covered 50% of gross rent owing and, in exchange, landlords were required to agree to reduce rent by 25% with the tenant remaining responsible for the final 25%. Support was also available to non-profit organizations and charities. Landlords could not evict tenants who had entered into agreements pursuant to the CECRA program.

Although initiated with good intentions, there were clear problems with the structure of this program from the start.

First, the pool of businesses deemed eligible to apply for CECRA was quite limited. Eligible businesses were considered those that paid less than \$50,000 per month in rent and who temporarily ceased operations or experienced at least a 70% drop in pre-COVID revenue.

Another barrier to relief was the fact that CECRA relied on the participation of landlords. Under CECRA, no rent relief was available to tenants whose landlords opted not to participate in the program. There was no option for tenants to apply on behalf of a landlord, nor were there other relief options available that the tenant could apply to unilaterally.

In an attempt to give CECRA more teeth and bolster applications for the program, British Columbia introduced legislation to prevent commercial evictions if landlords did not apply for the CECRA program. This moratorium on commercial evictions ended on October 1, 2020. Although tenants could not be evicted and leases could not be terminated during this time, tenants were still responsible for their rent payments.

### *Canadian Emergency Rent Subsidy*

To address the complaints about CECRA and further expand the scope of assistance provided to businesses, in September 2020, CECRA was replaced with the Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS). CERS is still in operation and is a more direct and accessible rent support program that allows commercial tenants to apply for subsidies without landlord participation.

Under CERS, commercial tenants are subsidized on a sliding scale, up to a maximum of 65% of eligible expenses until September 25, 2021. In some cases, those businesses subject to lockdowns, like restaurants and bars, are able to receive rent support of up to 90%. CERS does not require as dramatic a revenue drop as CECRA did—for most months there is no minimum revenue drop required to qualify for the subsidy. As we approach September 25, 2021, a minimum revenue drop does now apply and eligible businesses are restricted to those whose revenue dropped more than 10%.

#### *Case: The Bay*

Even with the assistance of government programs, COVID-19 still challenged tenants and landlords and required communication, understanding, and compromise on the part of both sides. The court acknowledged this difficulty in balancing the competing interests of commercial landlords and tenants during the pandemic in *Hudson's Bay Company ULC v. Pensionfund Investment Ltd.*, 2020 BCSC 1959.

In this case, the Bay was a tenant at the Coquitlam Centre Mall but had stopped paying rent in April 2020. Negotiations with the landlord had broken down, resulting in the landlord terminating the lease for non-payment of rent in November 2020. The Bay then sued the landlord, alleging that the landlord was in breach by failing to maintain the mall in a first-class condition, and relied on a broad “unavoidable delay” clause, arguing that its obligation to pay rent was suspended during the pandemic. The BC Supreme Court granted an interim injunction that prevented the landlord from terminating the lease, but also found that the Bay had to pay rent and arrears in full. This decision indicates that despite any issues with respect to the pandemic, and despite any programs that may supply some relief to tenants, the tenants are still required to meet their rent obligations.

### **RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES**

Residential tenancies felt similar pressures. Many renters were laid off as a result of the pandemic, leading to concerns of whether they would be able to pay rent and

keep a roof over their heads. As is the case with commercial tenants, the renter is generally still responsible for their rent until the term of the lease agreement is up. The threat of COVID-19 did not relieve tenants from their obligations to pay rent.

In order to assist renters, the provincial government implemented certain protections under the *COVID-19 Related Measures Act*, the *COVID-19 (Residential Tenancy Act and Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act) (No. 3) Regulation*, and *Residential Tenancy Policy Guideline 52 – COVID-19: Repayment Plans and Related Measures*. Like with commercial tenancies, the legislation and policies attempt to balance the competing needs of landlords and tenants.

Under the above legislation, the provincial government implemented a ban on issuing evictions for non-payment of rent for a period from March 18, 2020, to August 17, 2020. Landlords also could not charge a late fee for unpaid rent during this period.

In order to give tenants a reasonable timeframe to pay back any rent owed from March 18, 2020, to August 17, 2020, the provincial government introduced a repayment plan framework. Under this framework, landlords must give tenants a repayment plan for unpaid rent during the non-eviction period. As long as the tenant makes the required payments, they cannot be evicted for unpaid rent for that period of time. If the tenant defaults on the repayment plan, the landlord may evict the tenant.

The Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) is responsible for overseeing disputes between landlords and tenants. A number of RTB decisions have been brought by both landlords and tenants that involve disputes that took place during the pandemic. In these decisions, the decision makers of the RTB have outlined and applied the *COVID-19 Related Measures Act* and have clearly set out that although tenants have been given time to recover from the impacts of the pandemic, tenants ultimately must abide by their rent obligation and eventually pay back the amounts owed to landlords. Unpaid rent past the non-eviction period or unpaid rent pursuant to a repayment plan has generally resulted in orders for the tenant to either pay the landlord or vacate the property (RTB Decision 6505, RTB Decision 6326).

The provincial government has also initiated a rent freeze that has been extended until December 31, 2021. Any rent increases with an effective date from March 30, 2020, to January 1, 2022, are of no effect. This rent freeze does not apply to commercial tenancies, non-profit housing, co-op housing, and certain assisted living facilities. Moving forward, the provincial government has introduced a bill that will cap 2022 rent increases at the rate of inflation.



## LOOKING FORWARD

The pandemic also highlighted the importance of carefully worded lease agreements, especially with respect to “unavoidable delay” or “force majeure” clauses. Most leases will include a force majeure clause. Such a clause relieves or suspends a party’s performance of its obligations under a contract in the event of an unforeseeable circumstance. This clause may provide relief or suspend a tenant’s obligation to pay rent depending on the wording of the lease. Pre-pandemic, in many leases, even if there was a force majeure provision, that clause was unlikely to suspend the obligation to pay rent when due.

Some force majeure clauses may expressly include a pandemic, and more leases may provide for specific rights in health emergencies given the events of the past year. The presence of these provisions would provide the most clarity in future similar situations as to exactly what rights and remedies the parties have under the lease. Leases entered into following the pandemic will likely place more emphasis on the strength and obligations of the parties in unavoidable delay/force majeure clauses and should be carefully reviewed.

Having clear rights and remedies in place prior allows for more security than having to rely on government subsidies after the fact. The balance between securing payments and continued tenancy can be complicated under the best of circumstances, let alone when in the middle of a global pandemic. Both landlords and tenants should carefully review their leases and take this balancing act into account going forward.

### Sources

Residential Tenancy Branch Decisions: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/search?id=7C113F3AD75B4215B6CF5B1A55978659&page=4&q=covid&sort=R&tab=1>

<https://covid.smallbusinessbc.ca/hc/en-us/articles/360057493233>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/subsidy/emergency-rent-subsidy/cers-who-apply.html>

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/housing-and-tenancy/residential-tenancies/policy-guidelines/gl52.pdf>

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/housing-and-tenancy/residential-tenancies/temporary/covid-reg3-579-2020.pdf>



RECBC

## Transitioning to a Single Financial Regulator for BC

The Real Estate Council of BC will become part of BC Financial Services Authority (BCFSA) this summer.

A single regulator will provide strengthened consumer protection and increased public confidence in BC’s financial services sector including real estate.

This change means BCFSA will have sole authority over:

- Education and professional development
- Licensing
- Compliance and enforcement

BCFSA and RECBC are committed to working with the real estate sector to ensure the smoothest possible transition.

**Visit our website for more information**  
**[www.recbc.ca](http://www.recbc.ca)**

# PARKS CONTRIBUTE TO THE HEALTH OF THE REGION

## Metro Vancouver

**M**etro Vancouver's regional parks system has been contributing to the livability of our region for over 50 years, through conservation of natural assets and the protection of land where people connect with nature. Regional parks are important natural landscapes that serve to protect sensitive ecosystems and mitigate climate change. They also provide a majestic backdrop for educational and stewardship opportunities. As regional park users will attest, these natural spaces are not only important for user enjoyment but also intrinsic to the identity of our region as a landscape of natural beauty.

### THE NECESSITY OF PARKS

While regional parks have always been popular among residents and tourists alike, these natural spaces became an unexpected refuge for the region's residents when the many challenges presented by COVID-19 emerged. Regional parks provided spaces for people to safely connect with loved ones, quiet places within nature for mental well-being, and venues for physical exercise when most indoor fitness locations were closed. Throughout the pandemic, Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry has encouraged physical activity and emphasized that spending time outdoors is an effective way to reduce stress while supporting physical and mental well-being. As a result, regional parks experienced unprecedented visitation rates in 2020 — almost 16.5 million visits were recorded, which is a 38% increase over 2019.

Early in the pandemic, some parks agencies temporarily restricted public access out of an abundance of caution for public safety. While many reopened by early summer, the temporary closures caused increased pressure on Metro Vancouver's regional parks system, which has







Metro Vancouver staff visited regional parks throughout 2020 to remind visitors of COVID-19 safety protocols, such as maintaining a distance of two metres from others.



lasted into 2021. Additionally, with many people unemployed or working from home, residents found more opportunities to connect with friends and family safely, following the advice of Dr. Henry: “Few faces in big spaces.”

## KEEPING PARKS OPEN

Keeping regional parks open required Metro Vancouver to quickly adapt to new circumstances and implement various strategies to ensure residents had safe opportunities to spend time in nature. In a herculean effort to promote visitor safety, in April 2020, Metro Vancouver staff installed 528 COVID-19 signs in nine days in regional parks and greenways from Bowen Island to Aldergrove. Visitors may be familiar with the popular signs that encourage physical distancing by demonstrating what two metres looks like—such as an eagle with its wings spread approximately two metres wide. Some amenities were temporarily closed, such as parking lots, playgrounds, picnic shelters, group camps, and reservable facilities. At public washrooms within parks, cleaning of high-touch surfaces (like door handles and sinks) was increased. In some areas, trails were also changed to one way in order to reduce congestion.

Particularly during warm summer days, some regional parks experienced issues with crowding, parking, and traffic congestion issues. Metro Vancouver recently implemented seasonal pay parking at two regional parks, Lynn Headwaters Regional Park and Belcarra Regional Park, in an effort to reduce traffic and encourage use of public transit. Pay parking has also been shown to decrease the average length of time that visitors stay at regional parks, which increases turnover, allowing more visitors to enjoy the parks. The revenue generated from pay parking, at a rate of \$2 per hour or \$12 per day, will go towards the operation and further enhancements of regional parks for all users to enjoy.

Education is an important part of the long-term sustainability of regional parks, and despite the pandemic, Metro Vancouver staff working at regional parks



continued to engage and educate people of all ages on the magnificent ecosystems found in these parks. Metro Vancouver pivoted to online education for school groups and developed COVID-19 safety plans for the safe re-introduction of public programming and stewardship activities. Because of this, 5,629 people were able to take part in 310 programs, events, and outreach activities, while close to 2,500 volunteers and park partners contributed more than 8,000 hours to stewardship, education, and interpretive programs in 2020. These numbers are sure to increase in 2021.

One of Metro Vancouver's most popular greenspaces is the infamously challenging Grouse Grind. Known locally as “Mother Nature's Stairmaster,” this popular trail was uniquely impacted in 2020. Due to the pandemic, the Grouse Grind Trail opened on June 22—about six weeks later than usual. Despite the usual popularity of this trail, the overall visitation rate in 2020 was more than 50% less than the year previous. This was not only due to the shorter season, but also the restricted state of tourism during the pandemic (as the Grind is typically a top attraction for adventurous tourists) and a new requirement for hikers from mid-June to September to





reserve in advance the Grouse Mountain Resort Skyride used to descend the mountain. The result, frequently, was a long wait for weary hikers looking to return to the parking lot. To make sure that all hikers had cleared the trail safely by the end of the day, approximately 12 North Shore Rescue volunteers conducted 2,600 night patrols during the season. The patrol team assisted hikers who were injured, having difficulty on the trail, or unprepared without proper water or light.

In July 2020, the federal government announced over \$1.3 million in funding to improve the Grouse Mountain Regional Park trail system through the Community, Culture, and Recreation Infrastructure Stream of the *Investing in Canada Plan*, with the Government of British Columbia contributing more than \$1.1 million. The funding will support expansion and improvements to the existing plaza area on the main trailhead as well as reconstruction and realignment of portions of the British Columbia Mountaineering Club (BCMC) Route. New trail connections, along with additional interpretive and way-finding signs, kiosks, and viewpoints, will also improve park accessibility.



Clockwise from left: In April 2020, more than 500 signs were installed at regional parks, including Pacific Spirit Regional Park.

Staff enhanced cleaning efforts in order to keep regional parks safe for users, as seen in this photo taken in May 2020 at Pacific Spirit Regional Park.

Parking lots were busy at regional parks, requiring additional safety measures, as seen here at the Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve parking lot in April 2020.

To address challenges with overcrowding, parking capacity was reduced at the Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve.





Some trails were reduced to one way, such as seen here at Belcarra Regional Park, to encourage a safe flow of pedestrian traffic during the pandemic.

## MAINTAINING, IMPROVING, EXPANDING

Significant accomplishments were made in 2020 to improve a number of regional parks, despite the pandemic. This included completion of the Sheep Paddocks Trail at Colony Farm Regional Park as well as the Nature Discovery Trail and Wetland project at Aldergrove Regional Park. Additionally, substantial progress was made in 2020 on the Widgeon Marsh Regional Park pre-design, technical studies, and archeological and cultural assessments. Metro Vancouver is working closely with local First Nations and the City of Coquitlam through this process.

In addition to improving the existing greenspaces, Metro Vancouver is dedicated to expanding the regional parks and greenways system to protect sensitive ecosystems and to create more opportunities for people to connect with nature close to home. In the past 50 years, Metro Vancouver's regional parks system has grown from 3,835 hectares to over 13,632 hectares and today consists of 23 regional parks, five greenways, two ecological conservancy areas and two regional park reserves. In total, 33% of all regional parks are wetlands, 16% are mature forests, and 10% are old forests. Since 2018, Metro Vancouver has added more than 200 hectares of lands for new and existing regional parks all over the region, and is not slowing down.

On October 30, 2020, the Metro Vancouver Board approved the 2021 budget, which includes a \$4 million annual tax requisition for regional parks to boost the Regional Park Land Acquisition Fund. *Regional Park Land Acquisition 2050* is an important strategy that seeks to expand the reach of regional parks and create more protected greenspaces. The region is growing at a rapid pace, with a population estimated to grow from 2.5 million to 3.7 million by 2050. Between 2009 and 2014, over 1,600 hectares of sensitive ecosystems across the region were lost—and not only is this land important to the ecological health of our region, but it is also critical in mitigating the impacts of climate change. It is imperative to protect these lands for use by future generations and to secure the sustainability and livability of our region.

Metro Vancouver understands that regional parks are precious and worth protecting for generations to come. These spaces of natural wonder are fundamental to our well-being and our regional identity—irreplaceable cornerstones of ecological and environmental health. Keeping regional parks open during the pandemic has not been without its challenges, and as we start to envision life post-pandemic, staff remain committed to working with the public to ensure regional parks remain safe spaces to connect with loved ones and nature—not just for tomorrow, but for years to come.

*Photos provided by Metro Vancouver.*



# ORGANIZATION PROFILE

## BUILDING OWNERS AND MANAGERS ASSOCIATION OF BC



**B**uilding Owners and Managers Association of BC (BOMA BC) has been representing BC's commercial real estate industry since 1911. We're quite nimble considering our age! We strive to give our members what they need, when they need it.

The core of what we do is advocate on our members' behalf. Tax lobbying alone saves our industry millions of dollars every year. With environmental and sustainability programs, research reports, seminars, and networking events, we help keep our members educated and connected.

The commercial real estate industry is valued at more than \$350 billion, employing 40,000 British Columbians and contributing \$4 billion annually to the provincial economy—more employees than the oil, gas, and mineral extraction industries combined.

Our members manage a range of commercial building types—primarily office, mixed-use, and industrial, plus retail, government, and institutional. They are a diverse group of people with a wide variety of backgrounds that led them to our fast-paced and rewarding industry. They are the service providers (vendors) and frontline workers, who represent all segments of the industry, from janitorial to HVAC and everything in between. They are the people who set aside time on numerous committees or the board of directors and volunteer at events. Often the word *community* feels more appropriate than *association*.

BOMA BC engages younger generations through our New Professionals group and mentorship program. To attract people to our industry and provide clarity on what commercial property managers and building operators do, we recently completed a labour market study defining key skills and career opportunities. We're excited for the next phase, where we begin implementing recommendations.



### RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC

Prior to COVID-19, we did all our networking events, seminars, and luncheons in person. Then suddenly everything went virtual. We added "Coronavirus Resources" to our website in the early days, and we ran our first virtual seminar in April 2020 on managing human resource issues related to working from home. From that day forward, all education was delivered virtually; we quickly came up with a plan to effectively deliver programs and services remotely. By embracing technology, we were able to host a virtual Awards Gala and a 3D avatar Christmas event.

Our members have been equally adaptable, signing up for webinars and virtual networking events. An unexpected bonus of working virtually has been connecting with members from across the province who normally aren't able to attend our in-person events.

BOMA BC was an active participant of the BOMA Canada COVID-19 Working Group, which produced the national BOMA Pathway Back to Work Guide. Locally, we worked on cleaning and safety protocols with our stakeholders, helped define essential personnel, and lobbied for a better commercial rental grant assistance program. Helping the industry get people back into their offices continues to be a priority.

Hopefully this provides a snapshot of who BOMA BC is. If you'd like more information, please visit us at [boma.bc.ca](http://boma.bc.ca). We'd be happy to hear from you.



# TRACKING PANDEMIC BUYERS IN KAMLOOPS AND KOOTENAYS

Trevor Koot

**L**ike most, I am feeling pandemic fatigue—the idea that everything we do or talk about revolves around COVID-19 and the impacts it has had on us, our industries, and our people. That said, there are countless lessons and indicators that have resulted from this global pandemic and it is only prudent for those in leadership positions to continue to evaluate and, as difficult as it can be, predict what is coming next.

The Kamloops and District Real Estate Association (KADREA) and the Kootenay Association of REALTORS® (KAR) quickly noted the need to provide training and resources for our realtor members at the outset of the pandemic. Of course, nobody knew what the ultimate impacts would be and, quite frankly, the feeling at the time was that the market would do the exact opposite of what it ended up doing. It was a time of uncertainty and we just wanted to make sure our members had what they needed to continue to serve their clients. The flagship of these resources was the Live Tours feature that we rolled out for all members, along with training, to assist with adapting virtual, live meeting platforms for buyer showings at properties. These same resources were shared with other real estate associations across Canada and utilized by realtors from coast to coast.

Before I get into answering the question about buyer mobility and discuss the anecdotes of the “urban exodus,” I want to highlight the one thing that I think has been the biggest “win” of the pandemic for KADREA and KAR: the deep collaborative partnership that blossomed. (Though I don’t want to speak on my colleagues’ behalf, I would suggest the same applies to all BC real estate associations). What began as a sharing of the CEO between the two organizations has grown to include combined committees and task forces, crossover of employee responsibilities, collaborative member education sessions, and the list goes on.

Okay, let’s talk about where buyers are coming from. KADREA and KAR are in a slightly unique position to

answer this question because of a platform created at KADREA in 2018 called Buyer Path. Based on buyer postal code data collected during the course of a real estate transaction and entered into the MLS system, Buyer Path uses search criteria to tell us where buyers in a specified region are coming from over a specified period of time, in a specified price range and/or for a specified property type. So, we can determine where buyers were coming from for a particular price range pre-pandemic versus the same price range post- —well, let’s just call it “during-pandemic.”

Kamloops saw a modest increase in the percentage of buyers coming from the urban Lower Mainland (Vancouver and Fraser Valley) for purchases under \$500,000 from 14% pre-pandemic to 16% during-pandemic. However, for purchases over \$500,000, Kamloops saw a larger jump, from 17% of buyers coming from the Lower Mainland pre-pandemic to 23% during-pandemic.

The Kootenay region is a bit of a different story. We only started collecting buyer data in September 2019 so there is a limited pre-pandemic picture. Taking all sales (not breaking down price range) and including Alberta in the “urban exodus” calculation (because nearly all buyers from Alberta come from Edmonton or Calgary), the Kootenay region saw a drastic jump in the percentage of buyers coming from the Lower Mainland and Alberta from 20% pre-pandemic to 32% during-pandemic.

The Buyer Path app confirms the anecdotes we are hearing about the urban exodus to more rural areas. How impactful will these migration patterns be on the more rural markets? Are we just seeing the beginning of this new trend? Will buyer movement change once we achieve some level of normalcy? These are all questions that remain unanswered but we will certainly be monitoring in the coming months.

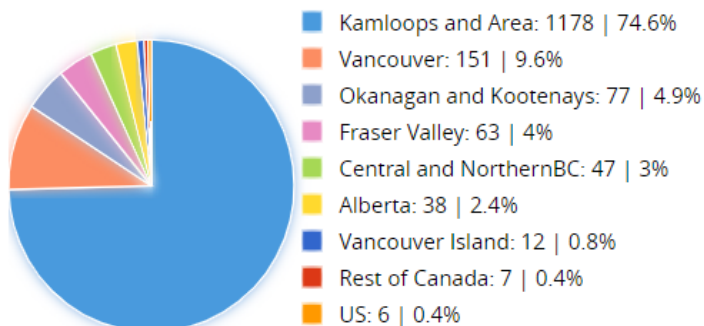
*Graphics provided by KADREA/KAR.*



## PRE-PANDEMIC MAR 1, 2019 – FEB 29, 2020

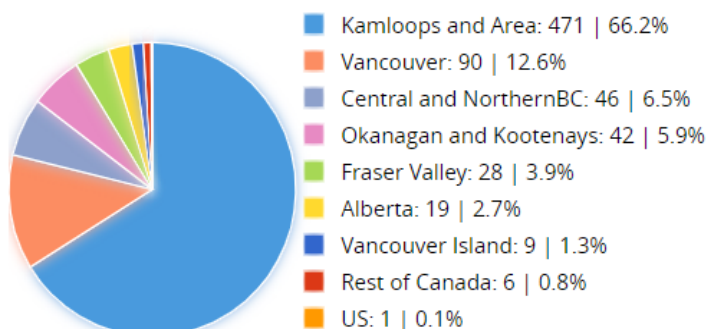
### KAMLOOPS \$500,000 AND UNDER

KADREA



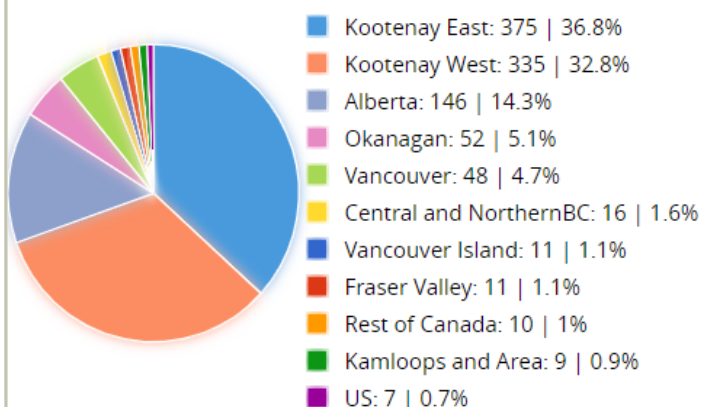
### KAMLOOPS \$500,000 AND OVER

KADREA



## KOOTENAYS SEPT 1, 2019 – FEB 29, 2020

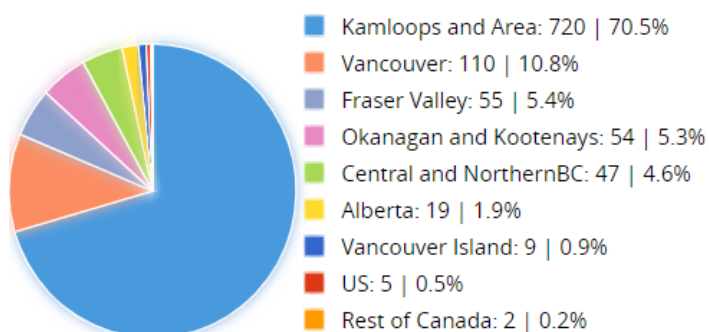
KAR



## DURING-PANDEMIC SEPT 1, 2020 – MAY 31, 2021

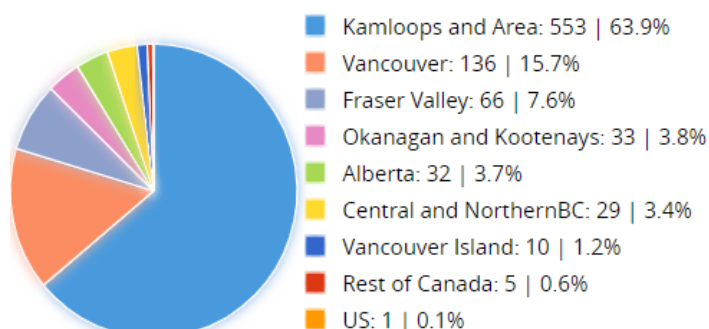
### KAMLOOPS \$500,000 AND UNDER

KADREA



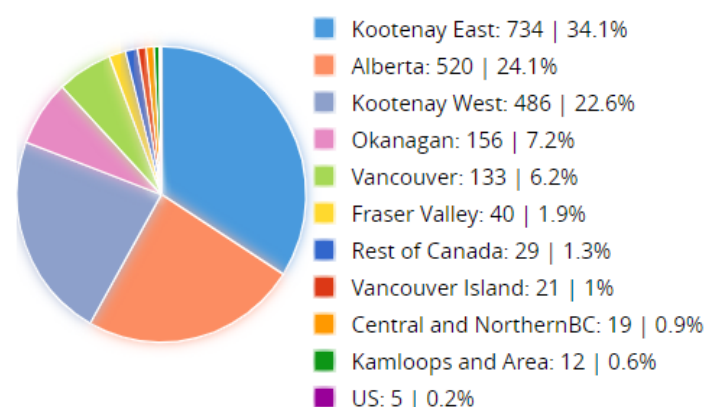
### KAMLOOPS \$500,000 AND OVER

KADREA



## KOOTENAYS SEPT 1, 2020 – MAY 31, 2021

KAR



# RECOGNIZING REIBC MEMBERS



**THE  
HIGHEST  
STANDARD  
OF  
EXCELLENCE**

**RI** The  
Real Estate  
Institute of  
British Columbia



This past year was a difficult one, and in such times the dedication and resilience of our members must not be overlooked. We are thankful for each and every one of you, not just those being recognized for their quinquennial memberships. Thank you, all, for contributing to the REIBC community.

# RECOGNITION 2021

We are honoured to recognize and celebrate our many members who have achieved excellence with REIBC membership.

## 5 YEARS

Guy Akester  
Jesse Arenson  
Leon Chan  
Chadwick Choy  
Tina Dhami  
Adam Durette  
Sebastian Espinosa  
Graham Gilchrist  
Kerry Gobbi  
Thomas Hala  
Mariana Janusic  
Michael Kwung  
Sharon Lalli  
Michael LaPorte  
Valeria Lifanova  
Scott Liliedahl  
Jennifer Lloyd  
Julian Mason  
Mike Meakin  
Darren Medwedew  
Dan Milburn  
Tammy Morin  
Nakashima  
Karen Obeck  
Vince O'Dwyer  
Heidi Palmer  
Ryan Peterson  
Jeffrey Shap  
Byron Stevenson  
James Thomas  
Christoph Uziel  
Sean Visser  
Mikky Walker  
Jeremiah Weiler  
Kurtis Williams  
Jimmy Yip

## 10 YEARS

Jennifer Anderson  
Nottingham  
Darryn Beuthin  
Cameron Bezanson  
Mehmood Munir  
Khan Chandel  
Nick Damiani  
Bryan Peter Furman  
Steve Howard  
Fay Lin  
Darcie Lindstrom  
Kit Matkaluk  
Bryan Murao  
Maurice Primeau  
Jenny Shao  
Tiffany Simmons  
Richard Starcevic  
Paul Karleon Sun  
Jessica Taylor  
Sterling Tran  
Ron Usher  
Janice Weninger

## 15 YEARS

G. W. Wayne Braid  
Tara Burton  
Catherine Du Bois  
Angela Hansen  
Linda Havers  
Jordan Hettinga  
Sean Hughes  
Heather Laker

## 20 YEARS

Lindsay Colin  
Taso Gavriel  
Geoff Green  
Brian Keenan  
Ian Lindsay  
Kevin Loggin  
William McCarthy  
Brent Morgan  
Raymond Nickle  
Marie Roset-Crawford  
Terry Sidhu  
David Thordarson  
Wayne Yu

## 25 YEARS

Kent Boag  
Heather Courville  
Steven Henderson  
Bill Hobbs  
Tony Lee  
Clifford McCool  
Chris McPhee  
Art Swenson  
Garwin Wuerch

## 30 YEARS

Brad Currie  
Rod Fram  
Philip Gertsman  
Margot MacFadyen  
Graham McIntosh  
Lita Powell  
Larry M. Serko  
David Wong

## 35 YEARS

Michael Bancroft  
Don Ellis  
Robert Fawcett  
Brad Fenton  
David Jurome  
Marlyne Mandziak  
Mona Murray  
Lonnie H. Neufeld  
Lana P. Quinn  
John Vaccaro

## 40 YEARS

Shahid Ahmed  
John Eastwood  
Bruce Gardner  
David Marshall  
Sandra Munro  
Dougal Shewan  
Richard M. Sirola  
Gordon Douglass  
Walker

## 45 YEARS

Anne Clayton  
Damian Dunne  
Stanley Wong

## 46 YEARS

Richard Osborne  
Candace Watson  
Richard Young

## 47 YEARS

Danny Boyd  
John Dean  
William F. Fife  
Glenn Lathrop

## 48 YEARS

Ronald Farrington  
Ronald J. Schuss

## 49 YEARS

Graham Allen  
John D'Eathe  
Stanley W. Hamilton  
Rudy Nielsen

## 50 YEARS

Ronald P. Reynolds

## 51 YEARS

Kenneth Johnson  
Lloyd Gary Kenwood

## 52 YEARS

Michael Naish  
Andrew Pearson

## 58 YEARS

Ian Macnaughton

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