



HOUSING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN BC'S NORTHERN CAPITAL

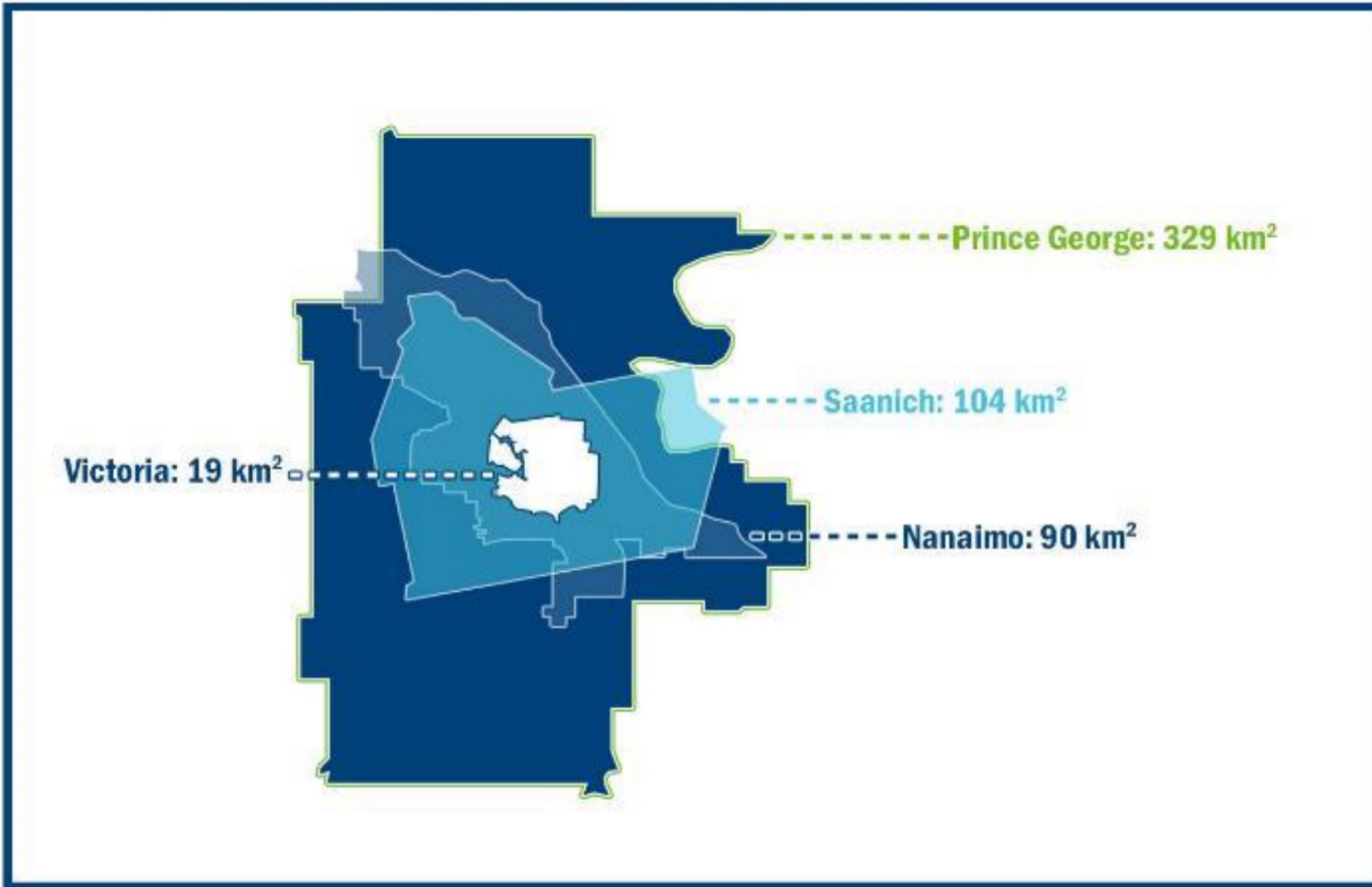
AGENDA

- Prince George
 - We're Affordable
 - We Support Development
 - We Still Have Challenges
 - We Have Ideas

PRINCE GEORGE

- **Vision:** a diverse, progressive, and vibrant provincial centre with accessible opportunities, a strong and stable economy, and an enviable quality of life.
- **BC's Northern Capital:** largest community in northern BC (76,708) with service and supply chains throughout the region of 332,000 people
- **Rapid Development:** 2020-2022 had an average 470 annual housing starts compared to 324 in the previous comparison period (2017-2019); \$251.7M in permits beat previous records by over \$14M

Municipal Area in Square Kilometres (2021)



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 - 2026

OUR VISION AND MISSION

A diverse, progressive, and vibrant provincial centre with accessible opportunities, a strong and stable economy, and an enviable quality of life.

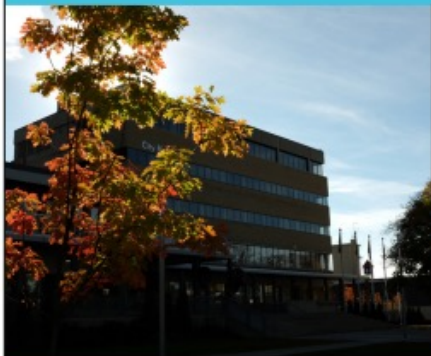
Along with our regional neighbours, we are leading the way to a strong and prosperous future. We grow by attracting and celebrating innovative people, businesses, and organizations.

OUR VALUES

- Civic Pride
- Inclusivity
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Optimism
- Resilience
- Vitality
- Transparency

OUR FOUR STRATEGIC PILLARS

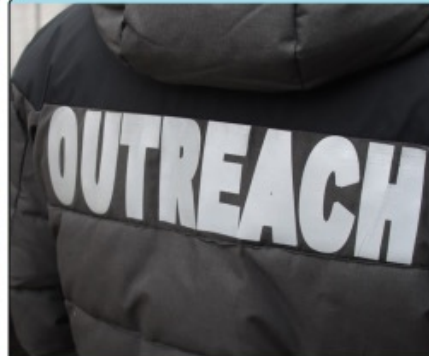
I. CITY GOVERNMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE



II. ECONOMIC DIVERSITY AND GROWTH



III. SOCIAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



IV. ENVIRONMENT STEWARDSHIP AND CLIMATE ACTION



WE'RE AFFORDABLE

VANCOUVER IS AWESOME

NEWS LIVING FEATURES CURATED CLASSIFIEDS OBITS SHOP BECOME A MEMBER STARS



Prince George ranked the most affordable city in B.C.

A list of 26 B.C. cities shows the most affordable places to live in the province.

Feb 3, 2023 3:00 PM [Read more >](#)



Vancouver ranked least affordable city in North America

The report indicates that affordability will also worsen more quickly in Canada than the US

Oct 25, 2021 4:19 PM [Read more >](#)

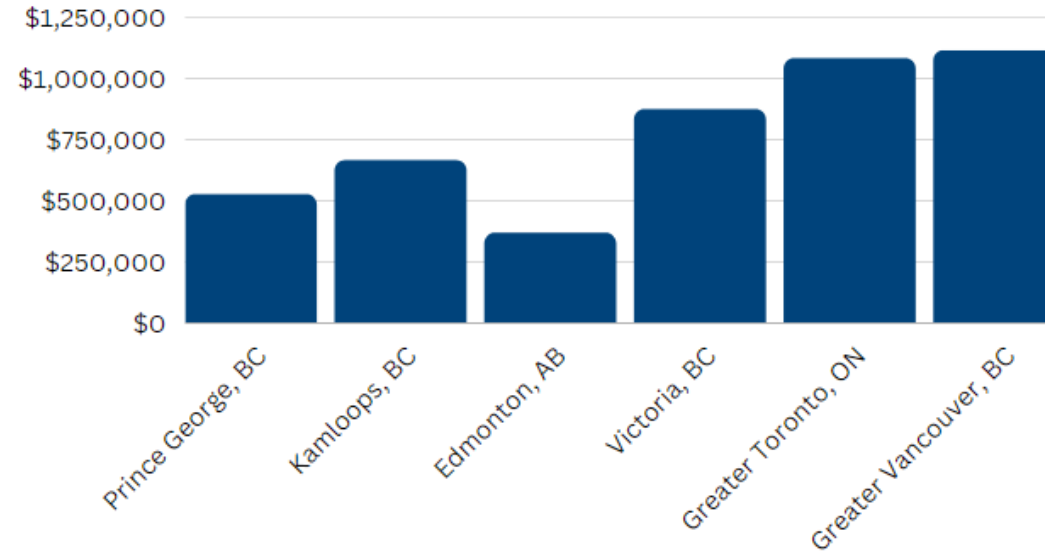
9479 B.C. strata owner loses fight for EV charger
By: Jeremy Hainsworth

8667 'We're finally here': Vancouver has a new spot for strong coffee and unique croissants 📷
By: Allie Turner

6758 Why doesn't Vancouver have a 24-hour SkyTrain?
By: Allie Turner

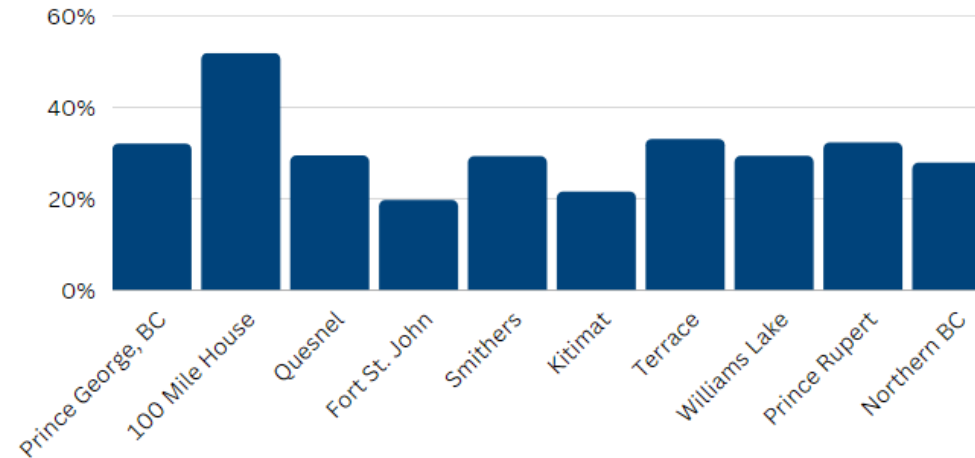
6039 B.C. rancher fined \$960,000 for fish habitat destruction

MLS® AVERAGE HOME SALE PRICE



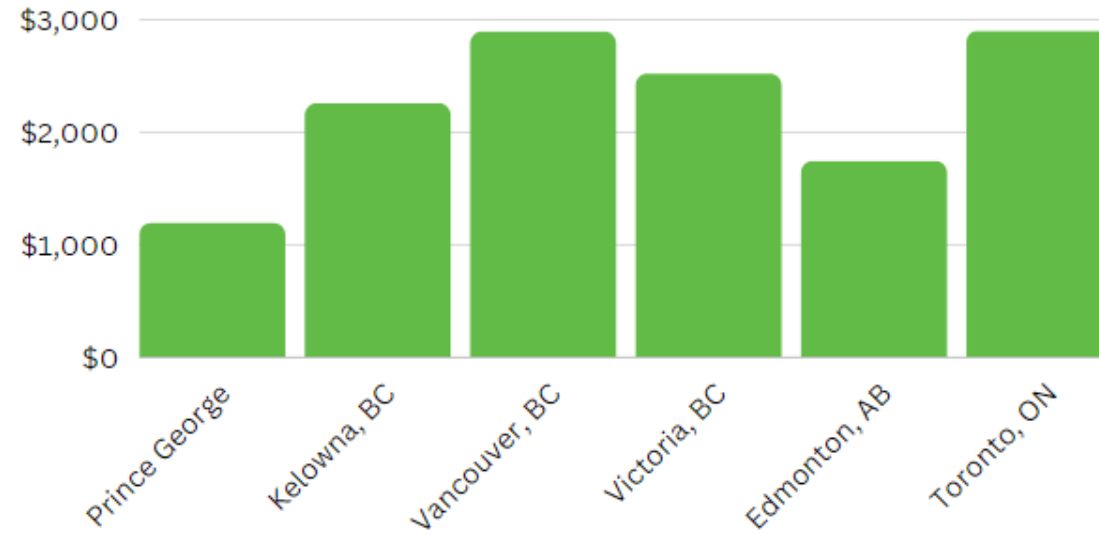
SOURCE: The Canadian Real Estate Association

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY INDICATOR 2021

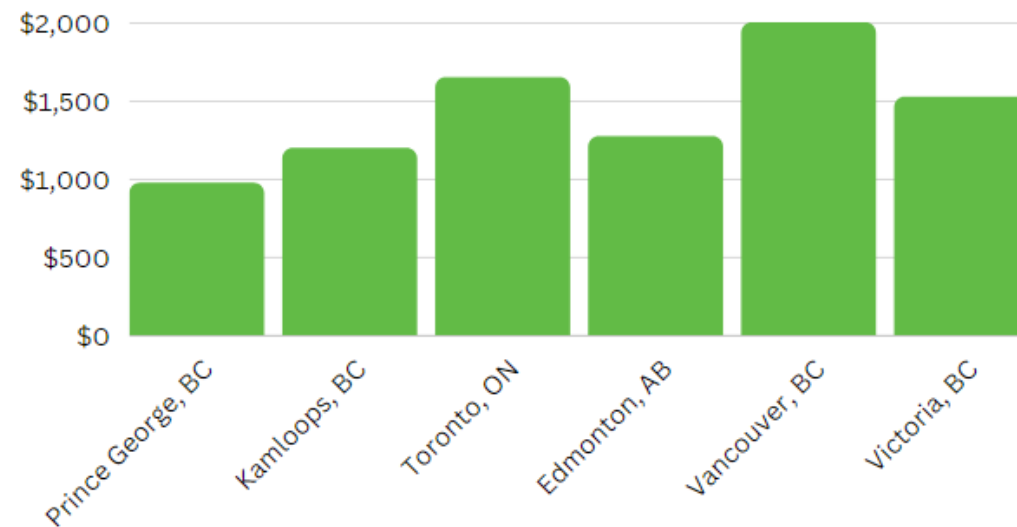


SOURCE: BC Northern Real Estate Board

AVERAGE MORTGAGE PAYMENTS ACROSS CANADA



AVERAGE RENT IN DIFFERENT CITIES (\$/MONTH, 2 BEDROOMS)



WE SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT

Incentives

- **Multi-Family Housing Incentive** increased housing in established priority growth areas
- **Downtown Revitalization Tax Exemption** reduce or waive property taxes within our C1 commercial zone. Most recent: 10-year exemption.
- **Reduced or no DCCs** for eligible small-lot subdivisions, downtown development, and non-market housing created by non-profits.

WE SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT

Zoning

- **Blanket-zoning** of single-family residential parcels to allow for narrow-lot housing
- **Carriage and cottage housing** permitted in all single-family home zones
- **Secondary suites** permitted in all single-family dwellings, except narrow lot housing
- **100% site coverage and no parking requirement** in downtown C1 zone
- **Zero-max density zone** was piloted and supported a student housing development

WE SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT

Other Policy and Bylaws

- No minimum **Gross Floor Area** for single-family homes allows for tiny homes virtually anywhere in town.
- **Neighborhood plans** specify density ratios and help diversify housing stock
 - Flexibility in neighborhood plan review for Council to make informed and community-minded decisions
- **Economic development priorities** include support of the construction sector and support of inbound development inquiries
- **OCP Modernization** happening in 2023-24

CASE STUDY – VEDA STUDENT HOUSING



- Z21 Zone: no-max density allowance
- Housing Incentive NDIT 'Dollars to the Door' program (\$10,000/door)
- 10-year Downtown Revitalization Tax Exemption

CASE STUDY – 1st AVENUE



- Partnership between CPG, BC Housing, and Northern Health
 - City provided land
 - BC Housing provided building
 - Northern Health providing integrated health care
- Modular construction (modules are designed and manufactured in a factory and delivered to the construction site)
- 50 units of supportive housing (phase 1)

WE HAVE CHALLENGES

Housing Needs

- 8,123 units needed by 2031 (1,000+ units/year)
- Rental housing and moderate-earner homeownership in highest need by volume
- Decreased vacancy rates (3% to 2.2%)
- Greatest increase in average total rents in past decade
- Largest cost increase in ownership (12%) since 2008
- Lone-parent families and individuals living alone most affected by affordability challenges both in homeownership and rental, and across many housing types

WE HAVE CHALLENGES

Policy and Bylaws

- **Density caps** in downtown Future Land Use areas, limiting high-rise multi-family developments and infill on smaller lots
- **Building and fire code-related cost challenges** to bring illegal suites into compliance with little to no incentive
- **OCP and neighborhood plan-related tensions** due to the development required and greenspace affected
- **Redundant zones** create barriers to development with outdated restrictions
- **Tax exemptions** impact municipal services and revenues and accept risk hoping for higher future assessments

WE HAVE CHALLENGES

Social and Economic Challenges

- **Building costs and interest rates** have risen rapidly recently, affecting the bottom line and ability to create attainable housing
- **Labor availability** compounds the cost and capacity to construct much-needed housing
- **Lack of public knowledge** of densification or conversion processes (building legal suites, adding carriage houses)
- **Land Availability** is scarce in some communities, requiring acquisition of Crown land

WE HAVE IDEAS

There are many opportunities for reducing core housing rates in Prince George, such as:

- Removing max density from downtown commercial zone
- Density bonusing
- Pre-approved plans
- Secondary suites in two-unit housing
- Increasing dwelling units on a single-family zoned lot
- Minimum density requirements
- Complete Community assessment

WE HAVE IDEAS

We are creating capacity to actively address housing needs through grant funding:

- Housing Needs Study to inform a Housing Needs Action Plan
- Action plan implementation to be managed by housing-specific staff (1 FTE)
- Northern Healthy Communities Fund administered by Northern Development providing \$300,000 over 3 years to support
- CMHC Housing Accelerator Fund requires action plans to facilitate funding for incentives and housing development supports

WE HAVE IDEAS

What could the Provincial or Federal governments be doing?

- Tax rebates for builders/developers meeting housing needs
- Programs under BDC, Community Futures, or other programs to finance housing construction
- More workforce development supports for institutions
- Support movement of key materials – waived tariffs
- Support smaller communities with capacity to meet funding program requirements to implement change
 - Housing Accelerator Fund requires an action plan with specific targets, initiatives – are rural communities disadvantaged?

THANK YOU

