

Attachment A

BRITISH COLUMBIA
RENTAL HOUSING TASK FORCE

RENTAL HOUSING REVIEW

RECOMMENDATIONS
AND FINDINGS



|

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Housing is the foundation of healthy families and strong communities. Having a safe place to call home is a basic and critical need for every person and every family.

Unfortunately, many people in British Columbia are struggling to find a safe and secure home they can afford. Longstanding issues with the laws and regulations that govern rental housing in B.C. have made the search for, and the provision of, secure, quality, affordable housing even more difficult. Weak protections, inconsistent enforcement, and other loopholes are leaving people vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

The residential tenancy laws, policies and services are not meeting the needs of renters and rental housing providers in British Columbia today as the Residential Tenancy Act has not undergone a comprehensive review in 16 years.

The existing residential tenancy system can be difficult to navigate, is outdated and fails to serve those who need it. For instance, the fact that the Act does not allow landlords and tenants to serve each other documents over email is a small example of antiquated regulations that make solving disputes more time consuming, expensive and difficult.

For these reasons, Premier John Horgan appointed a Rental Housing Task Force in April 2018, to advise on how to improve security and fairness for renters and landlords throughout the province.

The Task Force is composed of three members. It is led by the Premier's Advisor on Residential Tenancy, MLA Spencer Chandra Herbert. MLA Adam Olsen and MLA Ronna-Rae Leonard complete the team.

During the spring and summer of 2018, the Rental Housing Task Force conducted a provincewide engagement with landlords, renters and others concerned citizens. This engagement provided an opportunity for people concerned about our rental laws and policies to be heard. The results of this engagement were summarized in a 'What We Heard Report' that can be found in Appendix A. The recommendations developed in response can be found below.

- RECOMMENDATION 1:** STOP RENOVITIONS
- RECOMMENDATION 2:** WORK WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO DEVELOP TENANT COMPENSATION AND RELOCATION GUIDELINES IN THE CASE OF DEMOLITION OF PURPOSE-BUILT RENTAL TO REDUCE DISLOCATION, AND HOMELESSNESS OF AFFECTED TENANTS.
- RECOMMENDATION 3:** SET A CLEAR TIMELINE FOR A TENANT'S DECISION ON THE USE OF A RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL.
- RECOMMENDATION 4:** IMPLEMENT A B.C.-WIDE RENT BANK SYSTEM FOR LOW-INCOME PEOPLE.
- RECOMMENDATION 5:** STRENGTHEN ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAW, INCLUDING IMPLEMENTING A CLEAR PROCESS FOR MAKING, INVESTIGATING AND REPORTING ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY COMPLAINTS.
- RECOMMENDATION 6:** STRENGTHEN PENALTIES FOR BREAKING THE LAW, INCLUDING REFUSAL OF SERVICE FOR OUTSTANDING ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTIES.
- RECOMMENDATION 7:** INVESTIGATE WAYS TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO BAILIFF SERVICES IN SMALLER AND MORE REMOTE COMMUNITIES.
- RECOMMENDATION 8:** INVESTIGATE OTHER OPTIONS TO INCREASE THE REPAYMENT RATE FOR DAMAGES, NON-PAYMENT OF RENT AND OTHER STORAGE COSTS IF ORDERED BY THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCY BRANCH.
- RECOMMENDATION 9:** INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF CURRENTLY EMPTY STRATA HOUSING BY ELIMINATING A STRATA CORPORATION'S ABILITY TO BAN OWNERS FROM RENTING THEIR OWN STRATA UNITS.
- RECOMMENDATION 10:** MAINTAIN RENT TIED TO THE RENTER, NOT THE UNIT.
- RECOMMENDATION 11:** WORK WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO DEVELOP, IMPLEMENT AND ENFORCE SHORT-TERM RENTAL RULES TO BETTER PROTECT LONG-TERM RENTAL STOCK.
- RECOMMENDATION 12:** MAKE THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCY BRANCH MORE RESPONSIVE, ACCESSIBLE AND PROACTIVE WITH MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN FROM AND EDUCATE LANDLORDS AND RENTERS ON THEIR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.
- RECOMMENDATION 13:** IMPROVE FAIRNESS AND CONSISTENCY OF THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCY BRANCH DISPUTE RESOLUTION HEARINGS PROCESS BY RECORDING ALL HEARINGS.
- RECOMMENDATION 14:** IMPROVE PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS BY EXPANDING REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS TO INCLUDE MORE GROUNDS FOR REVIEW.
- RECOMMENDATION 15:** REQUIRE LANDLORDS WHO ARE FILING FOR EVICTION FOR CAUSE, OR FOR RENOVATION, TO PROVIDE ALL EVIDENCE WITH ANY EVICTION NOTICE TO THE AFFECTED TENANTS
- RECOMMENDATION 16:** IF REPAIRS ARE NEEDED TO MAINTAIN A RENTAL HOME AND THE LANDLORD IS REFUSING TO MAKE THEM IN A TIMELY WAY, HAVE THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCY BRANCH PROACTIVELY REDUCE THE RENT OF AFFECTED TENANTS UNTIL THE REPAIRS ARE COMPLETED.
- RECOMMENDATION 17:** ALLOW EMAIL AS A FORM OF NOTICE OF SERVICE BETWEEN LANDLORD AND TENANTS.
- RECOMMENDATION 18:** SPEED UP THE RETURN OF DAMAGE DEPOSITS TO TENANTS BY ALLOWING TENANTS TO MAKE A DIRECT REQUEST TO THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCY BRANCH FOR THE DAMAGE DEPOSIT WHERE NO DAMAGE HAS BEEN FOUND AND REPORTED BY THE LANDLORD.
- RECOMMENDATION 19:** WORK WITH THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY TO SEE IF RENT GUARANTEE INSURANCE, AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS TO INSURANCE COVERAGE, MIGHT BE PROVIDED FOR LANDLORDS IN B.C.
- RECOMMENDATION 20:** UNDERTAKE A REVIEW TO SIMPLIFY THE REGULATIONS RELATING TO A LANDLORD'S OBLIGATION TO STORE ABANDONED PERSONAL PROPERTY.
- RECOMMENDATION 21:** ENSURE IT IS CLEAR FOR ALL LANDLORDS AND RENTERS WHERE TO GO TO GET HELP FOR ALL FORMS OF RESIDENTIAL TENANCY
- RECOMMENDATION 22:** ADDRESS THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF NON-PROFIT HOUSING AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROVIDERS IN THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCY ACT.
- RECOMMENDATION 23:** ENSURE MANUFACTURED HOME PARK RULES ARE CLEAR AND UNDERSTANDABLE. CLARIFY WHAT OCCURS WHEN PARK RULES CONFLICT WITH LEASE OR CONTRACT RULES.

2 HOW WE GOT HERE

RENTAL HOUSING IN B.C. TODAY

There are approximately 1.5 million renters in British Columbia today. Vacancy rates in British Columbia are some of the lowest in the country, averaging 1.3% across the province. In some communities, such as Vancouver and Kelowna, the vacancy rate has fallen below 0.9%.

With rental vacancy so low, the B.C. government is committed to making sure renters have secure housing and rental-housing providers have the confidence to make their properties available for rent. This will help to increase housing availability and affordability.

The Residential Tenancy Act (Act) has not undergone a comprehensive review in 16 years. The Act is integral to the landlord-renter relationship, as it governs how renters and landlords work together. The Residential Tenancy Branch is the department that is in charge of these residential tenancy laws and provides invaluable dispute resolution hearings to renters and landlords. The realities of the rental housing market have changed in recent years and the outdated Act leaves both renters and rental housing providers vulnerable. Updating our tenancy regulations and laws to reflect the current realities of our housing market and other advancements is necessary to ensure the sustainability of our rental market for decades to come.

In the fall of 2017 and spring of 2018, several changes were introduced to modernize and balance provincial tenancy laws. These included increased fines for people who wrongfully evict their tenants and the elimination of geographic rent increases, which allowed rental housing providers to increase rents to correspond to match other rentals in the same area.

These legislative changes were the beginning of a larger undertaking to ensure B.C. tenancy laws reflect fair process, and ensure safe, secure and affordable housing for both renters and landlords.

Canada recognizes housing as a human right. As such, safe and secure housing is critical to personal well-being. However, much of our housing is provided by businesses, non-profits, and individuals. If we want to safeguard people's right to a good home, we also need to consider the financial decisions needed to maintain and improve that housing, to help ensure we have enough and that it is in good repair.

RENTAL HOUSING TASK FORCE

In April 2018, Premier John Horgan appointed a Rental Housing Task Force (Task Force) to advise on how to improve security and fairness for renters and rental housing providers throughout the province. The Task Force was appointed to look specifically at the Residential Tenancy Act, the Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act and the processes of the Residential Tenancy Branch. These acts are the foundation upon which all tenancy rules are based. The Residential Tenancy Branch is the arbiter of whether these rules are being followed.

The Task Force was led by Vancouver-West End MLA Spencer Chandra Herbert, who serves as the Premier's Advisor on Residential Tenancy. The Task Force also included MLAs Adam Olsen and Ronna-Rae Leonard.

The Task Force's work included:

- Talking to renters, landlords, non-profit housing providers and advocates concerning their views and experiences with current tenancy laws and processes;
- Speaking with manufactured home park tenants and owners about improvements to manufactured home park legislation;
- Identifying options to improve security and fairness for both renters and rental housing providers, while addressing the challenges of affordability;
- A review of the existing laws and how they apply to different housing situations; and
- A review of innovative approaches in other jurisdictions.

Through this work, the Task Force developed recommendations on how best to modernize and balance the provincial tenancy laws and processes to provide a fair process for safe, secure and affordable housing. The recommendations are designed to build a greater understanding of everyone's rights and responsibilities, helping to avoid conflicts in the renter-landlord relationship.

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

A provincewide engagement process was conducted between May and July 2018. The process was designed to identify challenges facing landlords and tenants, and to invite solutions to improve laws and regulations for everyone. The engagement connected with renters, rental housing providers, and other housing-related stakeholders from around the province. The process involved many opportunities to participate, including:

- Provincial organizations were invited to meet with the Task Force and followed up with written submissions.
- Organizations and stakeholders were invited to make formal submissions to the Task Force.
- 11 community meetings were held around the province in Burnaby, Kelowna, Maple Ridge, Nanaimo, Nelson, Prince George, Salt Spring Island, Surrey, Terrace, Vancouver and Victoria; and
- B.C. citizens were invited to provide their input through an online discussion and/or email.

These opportunities to participate resulted in:

- 24 stakeholder meetings
- 6,848 comments by 788 participants at 11 community meetings
- 368 email submissions
- 65 written submissions
- 1,431 comments received through the online forum

This feedback was summarized in a comprehensive 'What We Heard' report in July 2018 and can be found in Appendix A to this report. The report was used to guide the Task Force's recommendations to the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on how to improve residential tenancy laws and processes in British Columbia.

3 TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION OVERVIEW

The following section outlines 23 recommendations by the Task Force that are designed to ensure tenancy laws and processes reflect fair process, as well as safe, secure and affordable housing for both renters and rental housing providers. The recommendations are based on careful consideration of the input received during the engagement process and a review of successful and innovative approaches used in other jurisdictions.

The recommendations seek to balance the needs of both rental housing providers and renters, while also responding to the realities of today's housing market. Rental housing is a critical component of meeting the needs of a diverse population and is vital to a healthy economy.

EDUCATION

While significant changes are needed to modernize the Residential Tenancy Act, it became clear through the engagement process that many of the issues experienced by renters and rental housing providers could be solved through a better understanding of one's rights and responsibilities under the Act. As such, ongoing education for both parties is essential to maintaining and building a good relationship. Many rental housing providers and renters throughout the province described their relationships as positive and mutually beneficial. Nevertheless, the Task Force heard numerous stories of adverse relationships between renters and rental housing providers.

The Task Force believes that a breakdown in the landlord/renter relationship is often the result of a lack of understanding or a lack of commitment to respecting the rights and responsibilities of each party. In some cases, this is deliberate. However, in most cases, this is due to misinformation or lack of knowledge. It is important to note that laws can only serve to protect people if there is a basic understanding of their legal rights. Renters and landlords are accountable for knowing their roles and responsibilities, in order to ensure functional relationships.

EARLY RECOMMENDATIONS

On September 24, 2018, the Task Force made two early recommendations to the provincial government to ease pressure on renters in terms of affordability, while allowing needed maintenance

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to continue. The recommendations include:

- Changing the maximum rent-increase formula. The previous formula allowed for increases for inflation, plus an additional 2%. The new formula allows increases according to inflation only, removing the automatic 2% yearly increase.
- Allowing for additional modest rent increases above inflation through application to the Residential Tenancy Branch in cases where renovations and repairs to rental units have been completed.

These recommendations follow the approach of Ontario and Manitoba, which was a solution identified by numerous stakeholder groups and individuals during the engagement process. These recommendations strike a balance between keeping rent more affordable, while ensuring needed repairs are completed to maintain and improve rental housing.

It is recommended the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing consult further with landlord and tenant groups to determine the criteria for reviewing landlord applications for increases above the inflation rate.

On September 26th, the provincial government accepted the Task Force's early recommendation, announcing a cut to the 2019 rental increase cap from 4.5% to 2.5%, reflecting the Consumer Price Index (CPI) only. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is committed to working with landlords on the criteria for modest increases that will be allowed once major renovations and repairs have been completed.

SAFE AND SECURE HOUSING

Safe and secure housing depends on rental housing providers having the confidence to make their properties available as rentals. Equally, safe and secure housing depends on the ability for renters to know that if they respect their tenancy agreement, they can stay in their home in the long-term, without threat of unfair eviction.

In order to do more to protect the right to safe and secure housing, the following recommendations focus on the rights of rental housing providers and tenants during renovations and eviction processes.

It should be noted that many of the recommendations below will require education for renters and rental housing providers to ensure both parties understand their roles and responsibilities.

Recommendation 1: Stop renovictions

During the public engagement process, the Task Force heard many accounts of renters being evicted due to renovations when they were willing to accommodate the renovations, and have their tenancy continue. Many renters felt that they had no recourse to vacating their unit once they received an eviction notice, or felt that they needed to provide evidence, or even hire a contractor, to prove that they could accommodate even minor renovations.

One of the most frequently mentioned challenges from renters was unfair evictions, including renovictions and other evictions, based on false claims. They told the Task Force about how stressful it was to live with the constant threat of being forced from their home with too little time to find alternative housing in a challenging rental market.

Renters expressed concerns and fears around displacement, including one renter in Vancouver who said that *'safe housing'* meant living *"without the constant threat of renovations"*.

Under the Residential Tenancy Act, there is a need to provide clear guidance on what accommodations and actions by rental housing providers and tenants are acceptable during renovations. The lack of clear guidance has left rental housing providers and renters vulnerable to misinterpretation or abuse of the Act. Improvements should be made to the Act to allow for:

- Maintaining tenancy during renovations, as long as the tenant is willing to accommodate construction. Eviction should only be approved if there is evidence that no reasonable accommodations can be made to maintain the tenancy.
- Evictions for renovations should be reserved for the rare instance of serious, major and long-term renovations, such as seismic upgrades, which extend the life of a building considerably where it is impossible to keep tenants in the building due to health and safety risks, or unreasonable to expect a tenancy to continue, due to the extensive length of time a building will be uninhabitable.

These improvements to the Act, to better accommodate tenants during renovations, are intended to stop evictions for cosmetic changes to a unit, or even bigger renovations like windows, plumbing or electrical work.

During the engagement process, many renters called for improvements to the right of first refusal, specifically asking for tenants to be able to return to their units at the same or a similar rent after renovations have been completed.

It is recommended that government monitor changes to the Residential Tenancy Act that have recently been made, and the changes recommended in this report, to determine whether they are successful at reducing renovations before taking further action on the right of first refusal.

If the changes to accommodate tenants during renovations are not implemented, or if they are not successful at reducing renovations, it is recommended that regulations on the right of first refusal are revisited. Regulations on the right of first refusal could be strengthened to include further regulation, such as addressing rent increases following a tenant exercising their right to return to a rental after renovations.

Recommendation 2: Work with local governments to develop tenant compensation and relocation guidelines in the case of demolition of purpose-built rental to reduce dislocation and homelessness of affected tenants.

Currently, some local governments have tenant compensation and relocation policies in place that may include guidance for compensation for moving expenses, provision of housing options at a similar rent, or extended timelines to provide notice of demolition. Other local governments do not have policies to guide tenant compensation or relocation when purpose-built rentals are demolished. Many local governments are challenged by a lack of clarity around their ability to develop such policies.

It is recommended that the Province and the Residential Tenancy Branch work to develop guidelines and standards to align procedures around tenant compensation and relocation with local governments and other partners, including rental housing providers, developers and renters.

By developing clear tenant compensation and relocation guidelines for local governments, the Residential Tenancy Branch and rental housing providers can aim to reduce dislocation and homelessness of affected tenants in the case of demolition of purpose-built rentals.

It should be noted that this recommendation may require amendments to other legislation, such as to the Local Government Act, to support the ability of local governments to create the recommended policies.

Recommendation 3: Set a clear timeline for a tenant's decision on the use of a right of first refusal.

The Task Force is recommending that a clear timeline be established for the use of the right of first refusal, to complement other changes to the Residential Tenancy Act for its use.

Should the existing tenant decide not to return to the unit following renovations, it is important that landlords have enough notice to find suitable tenants for the unit in time for its availability.

This recommendation responds to requests from landlords so they can plan ahead and get their rental homes occupied as soon as possible following renovations.

Recommendation 4: Implement a B.C.-wide rent bank system for low-income people.

Affordability was a common issue raised throughout the engagement process. Task Force members heard British Columbians voice their concerns about this issue from before the engagement process started.

"I do think the rent can be outrageous in comparison to the wages we earn. However, it is wrong to put all the burden to the landlord, who takes substantial risks just to rent out their own property," wrote a landlord participating in the online forum. The participant goes on to suggest the Province, *"establish rent assist programs to help low-income renters to afford a place, without interfering with the market."*

A rent bank is a service that provides interest-free loans to low-income households who have regular income but face eviction as a

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result of short-term financial difficulties through no fault of their own.

The program allows tenants facing eviction (for non-payment of rent) to apply to a local rent bank to receive financial assistance through a loan. If a tenant's application is approved, the outstanding rent is paid directly to the landlord on behalf of the renter.

While small rent banks operate in some B.C. communities, the Task Force is recommending a B.C.-wide system be implemented to further support tenants through short-term financial crisis. A provincewide system would reduce unnecessary evictions and homelessness, while ensuring rental housing providers receive the rental income they are entitled to under their tenancy agreement.

A new provincewide rent bank would build on other improvements government has made to housing supports, including increasing eligibility and benefits under the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) and Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER).

STRENGTHENED ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES

Everyone deserves to be treated fairly by government. That's why it is essential that the Residential Tenancy Act and Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act are enforced and the rights of renters and landlords as they access residential tenancy processes and services.

Fair treatment includes consistent enforcement of the law. The Act becomes meaningless without consequences, leaving housing providers and renters vulnerable to abuse.

The government is establishing a Compliance and Enforcement division within the Residential Tenancy Branch to investigate complaints and take enforcement action where warranted. However, there is a need for more and better enforcement.

During the engagement process, a lack of enforcement was a common issue raised by both rental housing providers and tenants. The following recommendations focus on empowering the Residential Tenancy Branch to consistently enforce rules around renting, strengthening protections for both landlords and renters.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen enforcement of the law, including implementing a clear process for making, investigating and reporting administrative penalty complaints.

The Residential Tenancy Act allows the Residential Tenancy Branch to issue administrative penalties, in the form of a monetary fine, when a renter or landlord repeatedly defies or ignores their obligations under the Act, or fails to comply with a decision or order of the Residential Tenancy Branch.

This power was given to the Residential Tenancy Branch in 2006. However, over the past 12 years, there have only been two instances in which an administrative penalty has been issued.

The Task Force heard much support for stronger enforcement of the law. We recommend the Residential Tenancy Branch take steps to strengthen enforcement by implementing a clear process for investigating reports and applying administrative penalties. By exercising these powers under the Act more consistently

and frequently, the Residential Tenancy Branch will send a clear message that behaviour that blatantly disregards the Act is not acceptable and will have consequences.

The process should consider the resources needed to enforce administrative penalties and should examine whether it would be beneficial to create and maintain a database to track repeat offenders.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen penalties for breaking the law, including refusal of service for outstanding administrative penalties.

Administrative penalties are used to enforce compliance with regulations and laws. They are cash penalties assessed and imposed by a regulator without recourse to a court or independent administrative tribunal. The Residential Tenancy Branch only considers imposing administrative penalties in the most serious, repeated cases of non-compliance. The Residential Tenancy Branch maintains the policies and procedures to ensure fairness, impartiality and opportunities to respond to evidence, including the [Residential Tenancy Policy Guideline 41. Administrative Penalties and the Administrative Penalties Overview.](#)

This recommendation proposes that the Residential Tenancy Branch should implement policies and procedural measures to refuse service to individuals who have outstanding administrative penalties.

The Task Force heard that both renters and housing providers would like to see improvements to efficiency and wait times in the Residential Tenancy Branch. Refusing service to non-compliant individuals who have outstanding administrative penalties will provide more opportunities for the Residential Tenancy Branch to hear other important cases.

Recommendation 7: Investigate ways to provide affordable access to bailiff services in smaller and more remote communities.

The process of evicting a tenant, including hiring a court bailiff, is at the expense of the landlord. This can be an onerous expense, especially since only an authorized court bailiff can legally remove the tenant and their belongings. In many cases in rural B.C., hiring an authorized court bailiff may require paying for travel expenses from another location. In theory, rental housing providers may seek compensation from the tenant to recover the costs associated to hiring a bailiff. However, it can be difficult to recover these costs if there is no way to contact the tenant or the tenant does not have the funds to repay the costs.

During the community meetings, the Task Force heard many rental housing providers express that the burden of requiring a bailiff to evict a tenant was onerous where no bailiffs are available in their area. Landlords generally felt that increased “[access \[to\] a reliable and efficient procedure for evicting problematic tenants](#)” is needed, and that “[bailiff availability is low and cost \[is\] way too high](#)”.

Providing affordable access to bailiff services will ensure fair access to the judicial process for rental housing providers in rural communities, as well as incentivizing widespread availability of rental housing in communities in every part of the province.

Recommendation 8: Investigate other options to increase the repayment rate for damages, non-payment of rent and other storage costs if ordered by the Residential Tenancy Branch.

Penalties and fines are only an effective deterrent to breaking rules and laws if people pay them. Rental housing providers need to have confidence that they will get paid what they are owed if tenants are ordered to pay for damages or rent. Renters need to have confidence that they will get compensation in cases where they have been wronged.

The Task Force heard from stakeholders on all sides of the issue that it needs to be easier to have monetary orders issued in cases where people are not paying what they owe in a timely way. Currently, the Residential Tenancy Branch may hear monetary claims up to \$35,000.

After a hearing with the Residential Tenancy Branch, an arbitrator may issue a decision document and, in some cases, an Order. An Order must be served to the appropriate parties within a specific time frame. Under the current Residential Tenancy Act, the Residential Tenancy Branch does not have the authority to enforce orders. As such, the B.C. Supreme Court or provincial court is required to enforce an Order.

It is recommended these procedures be reviewed to determine how they may be changed to improve the issuance and collection of monetary orders.

SUPPLY

There is a lack of rental housing supply to meet British Columbia's rental housing demand. The provincial vacancy rate is one of the lowest in Canada (1.3%) and in some communities, the vacancy is under 0.9%.

The lack of available housing in B.C. is a barrier to enabling positive landlord-tenant relationships. For example, if a conflict arises between a renter and a rental housing provider, there may be little opportunity for renters to end a tenancy and find another unit for fear of homelessness.

In order to address this problem, the Province has taken a number of steps to ensure that long-term rental housing is protected, including the Speculation and Vacancy Tax, and increasing powers to enable strata corporations to fine owners who rent short-term in violation of the strata agreement.

During the engagement process, the lack of available housing emerged as a barrier to leaving undesirable tenancy situations.

Recommendation 9: Increase the availability of currently empty strata housing by eliminating a strata corporation's ability to ban owners from renting their own strata units.

With low vacancy rates throughout the province, it is clear that more needs to be done to increase the rental housing supply. [Supply](#) was one of the top topics discussed on the online forum. Renters were especially concerned that there is not enough housing in urban areas.

Several solutions to address the vacancy rates were put forward by those who participated in the engagement process. Based on the input, and acknowledging that the quickest way to increase supply is to make existing housing units that are currently empty available, the Task Force is recommending the Province eliminate the ability of strata corporations to restrict owners from renting their own strata units.

As one online participant wrote in support of removing rental bans in strata properties, *"Allowing stratas to ban rentals assumes that renters are hazardous, and supports vacant condos owned by speculators. Condos have become fundamental to the supply of rental housing and should not be allowed to be prohibited."*

Most Canadian provinces allow owners of strata units to rent them out and do not allow discrimination against renters.

While the Task Force believes this change will help to increase the rental housing supply, it is also important to give strata corporations the ability to evict tenants in exceptional cases where negligence, abuse or law breaking is disrupting the quiet enjoyment of other residents, putting people in danger, or harming the building.

"Allowing stratas to ban rentals assumes that renters are hazardous, and supports vacant condos owned by speculators. Condos have become fundamental to the supply of rental housing and [renting them] should not be allowed to be prohibited."

Recommendation 10: Maintain rent tied to the renter, not the unit.

During the engagement process, the Task Force heard a strong desire from some renters and renter advocates to improve affordability by tying rent increases to the unit, not the tenant. They felt that this would help end wrongful evictions intended to raise rents beyond the allowable maximum.

Members also heard concerns from rental housing providers that a change of this kind would make it challenging for them to cover their costs, with some considering selling and, therefore, removing their property from the rental stock. Rental housing developers said that they would cease developing needed rental units if this change was brought in, as it would make their developments unaffordable to build. Concerns were also raised about the large amount of paperwork and bureaucracy that would need to be created to implement such a system.

Due to the above concerns, and the large number of changes that have already been made, including a reduction in the annual allowable rent increase, increased fines for bad-faith evictions, increased enforcement of the law and changes that are being recommended, the Task Force is not recommending a change at this time.

While the Task Force was not given the mandate to develop solutions to the supply shortage of rental housing, the Task Force did hear from many who pointed out that the supply of rental housing was a big part of the problem facing renters.

The Task Force is encouraged to hear the minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has committed to working with municipalities and rental housing developers, to find ways to reduce the amount of time it takes to get through municipal permitting processes and encourages the minister to continue to look for other means to address this challenge.

The Rental Housing Task Force is optimistic that the work being done through initiatives like the Building BC: Community Housing Fund and the B.C. Student Housing Loan Program for public post-secondary institutions will also help address the pressing need for greater supply of affordable rental homes. The Task Force also encourages the government to monitor the implementation of these recommendations to see if they are successful at reducing bad-faith evictions, with the goal of improving people's security in their rental homes and to make adjustments, if necessary.

Recommendation 11: Work with local governments to develop, implement and enforce short-term rental rules to better protect long-term rental stock.

Short-term rentals have had a serious impact on the price of rental housing in communities throughout British Columbia, increasing the cost of homes and displacing long-term renters.

Throughout the Rental Housing Task Force's engagement, one of the most mentioned solutions given by renters was to, "*increase the rental supply and protect the existing rental stock.*" The Task Force heard from many people that short-term rentals had flooded the market and there was a call to action to, "*severely restrict short-term rentals (Airbnb) provincewide.*"

Increasingly, local governments are regulating short-term rentals through various mechanisms, such as enforcing business licenses, zoning restrictions and hefty fines for non-compliance. It is recommended that the Province work with local and regional governments to develop, implement and enforce short-term rental rules to better protect long-term rental stock.

An example of a provincial tool that has recently been introduced to protect long-term housing supply includes regulations that allow strata corporations to fine strata owners up to \$1,000 per day if they are breaking strata bylaws by providing short-term rentals in their units.

FAIR PROCESS

Recommendations under Fair Process focus on improvements to the Residential Tenancy Branch. The Task Force heard from many renters, rental housing providers and advocates who feel the current policies and processes are outdated and ineffective in responding to the needs of those requiring support and resources.

Recommendation 12: Make the Residential Tenancy Branch more responsive, accessible and proactive with more opportunities to learn from and educate landlords and renters on their rights and responsibilities.

Throughout the engagement process, the Task Force heard that both renters and rental housing providers face barriers in accessing resources through the Residential Tenancy Branch.

People told the Task Force that they faced long wait times, limited local resources, inconvenient hours of operation and were given inconsistent information when they tried to access services through the Residential Tenancy Branch.

The 'What We Heard' report identified, *"unsupportive or difficult-to-use Residential Tenancy Branch processes"* as one of the top five challenges faced by rental housing providers. On the other side, *"improve the Residential Tenancy Branch"* was one of the top five solutions heard from renters and rental housing providers during the community meetings.

The Residential Tenancy Branch was also discussed frequently on the online forum. One participant commented that, *"The Residential Tenancy Branch is badly underfunded and is not able to serve its purpose."*

In September 2017, the provincial government announced a \$3.2-million annual funding increase for the Residential Tenancy Branch. This additional funding has made a significant difference with more resources, higher staffing levels and better and quicker service. While these additional resources have started to reduce wait times, more can be done to improve the efficiency of the Residential Tenancy Branch, and better support both renters and rental housing providers. This includes:

- Continuing to bring down wait times
- Expanding hours of operation to accommodate needs outside of a traditional work day
- Establishing regional information sessions to increase access to resources
- Increasing capacity for public education to ensure renters and rental housing providers understand their roles and responsibilities

Recommendation 13: Improve fairness and consistency of the Residential Tenancy Branch Dispute Resolution Hearings process by recording all hearings.

Rental housing providers, renters and stakeholders all share a desire to increase the fairness and transparency of the dispute resolution process for everyone.

Ensuring there is a record of all dispute resolution hearings was one of the solutions suggested to increase fairness and transparency by those who participated in the engagement process, including one participant who suggested that the Residential Tenancy Branch should, *“Allow all hearings to be recorded [...] to ensure that evaluations are fair and respectful and that everyone involved feels the process is accountable,”* underscoring that, *“if [recording] can be done to ensure calls about our phone bills are up to par, surely it can be done to ensure decisions about people’s homes are.”*

Under the current Residential Tenancy Act, any form of recording a dispute resolution hearing is prohibited. A written request can be made within seven days of a hearing for an official transcript by an accredited court reporter, at the expense of the requesting party.

Recording all dispute resolution hearings will promote a more accountable decision-making process and serve as a check and balance for arbitrator error. With almost all dispute resolution hearings conducted over the phone, an automated system to record the hearing is recommended by the Task Force.

Recommendation 14: Improve procedural fairness by expanding review considerations to include more grounds for review.

Review considerations provide an opportunity for a landlord or tenant to request an arbitrator take a second look at the decision or order made following a dispute resolution hearing. Under the current residential tenancy act, there are limited circumstances in which a review can be requested by the Residential Tenancy Branch. This forces renters and landlords to go through a Supreme Court judicial review when a decision contains an error of fact or law, or when a decision is made that is procedurally unfair. The judicial review process is often complicated and overwhelming for the people involved.

During the engagement process, the Task Force heard a desire to expand the Residential Tenancy Branch’s grounds for review. In a written submission by the Community Legal Assistance Society, the organization recommended the Task Force incorporate a wider range of grounds for review, including errors in jurisdiction, procedure, fact or law, as well as issues of procedural fairness. This would allow renters and tenants to request review considerations directly with the Residential Tenancy Branch.

Recommendation 15: Require landlords who are filing for eviction for cause, or for renovation, to provide all evidence with any eviction notice to the affected tenants.

Through the engagement process, the Task Force heard calls to stop unfair and illegal evictions.

Countless stories were provided through the online forum, including a tenant on Vancouver Island who wrote, *"My main concern is renoviction [...] I live in an 18-unit building where renovictions are underway, one or two units at a time. The landlord is proposing to make cosmetic changes, in order to clear out the tenants and literally double the rents."*

Many renters voiced that they felt they had no recourse to vacating their units when served a notice of eviction. Currently, the burden of disputing an eviction falls to the renter and the eviction process has no requirements for the landlord to provide any supportive evidence or to notify the Residential Tenancy Branch of the eviction.

Should the renter disagree with the notice to end a tenancy, the renter must apply for a dispute resolution, submitting a tenant's application for dispute resolution along with a copy of the notice to end tenancy.

Two of the solutions identified during the engagement to deter unfair and illegal evictions were ensuring rental housing providers give their evidence for eviction first, as well as improving the monitoring and reporting of evictions.

In cases of major renovation, it is recommended that rental housing providers be required to give evidence that proves that no reasonable accommodation of the tenant can be made and that an eviction is necessary to complete required work. Additionally, it is recommended that rental housing providers should be required to file all eviction notices and evidence with the Residential Tenancy Branch at the same time they file with the tenant.

This recommendation will help tenants understand the case being made against them before they decide to dispute the eviction, allowing them the time to develop their own evidence package in response, as well as providing greater information to the Residential Tenancy Branch about what is happening in rental housing.

Recommendation 16: If repairs are needed to maintain a rental home and the landlord is refusing to make them in a timely way, have the Residential Tenancy Branch proactively reduce the rent of affected tenants until the repairs are completed.

The Task Force heard accounts of renters living in unsafe and uninhabitable conditions due to a lack of maintenance. In fact, *"inadequate maintenance and building conditions"* was the top challenge faced by renters throughout the province. When a unit or a building is in disrepair, the tenant's health, safety and quality of life is at risk. Through the online forum, a tenant in the Lower Mainland shared that his landlord,

“stopped fixing very dangerous problems in the building that can make people sick or are just physically dangerous, because he knows he can soon sell...”

When needed repairs haven’t been made by a landlord despite repeated requests from the tenant, an arbitrator can issue a repair order for a problem in a unit or a building. In some cases, the order is ignored and the tenant may end up living with the problem for months even if they go back to the Residential Tenancy Branch to try to get help.

The Residential Tenancy Branch has the legislative power to reduce the rent of affected tenants until repairs are done. It is recommended that the Residential Tenancy Branch change their procedures to allow an arbitrator to issue a rent reduction at the same time as issuing the repair order in cases where important repairs have been left undone, despite attempts to get the matter addressed by the landlord. The Task Force believes that doing so will encourage landlords to proactively repair rental homes and make it easier for tenants to get some relief in the case of a landlord who is failing to upkeep their property.

This, in addition to the compliance and enforcement unit, is intended to facilitate faster repairs to renters’ homes. The Residential Tenancy Branch can better support tenants living in unsafe conditions and send a clear message by issuing rent reductions along with repair orders that this type of inaction will not be tolerated.

Recommendation 17: Allow email as a form of notice of service between landlord and tenants.

Under the current law, when rental housing providers and renters communicate about matters like rent increases or a forwarding address, they can’t use email or text messaging. Both are considered unacceptable methods of notification under the current residential tenancy legislation. Notices are only considered received if they are given directly to the other party, sent via regular mail or faxed.

The Task Force heard from both renters and rental housing providers that there is a desire to use modern forms of communication, such as email, as an acceptable form of notification. During a community meeting, a participant commented that, *“The serving notices process needs to be updated to include technological advances, like text [messages] and emails.”* The ability to use email as an approved form of notification will make it easier for tenants and rental housing providers to communicate and remove barriers experienced by those

“The serving notices process needs to be updated to include technological advances like text [messages] and emails.”

without access to a printer.

The Task Force recommends the provision be amended to allow for communications via email in appropriate circumstances and where there is evidence that the communication was received. To that effect, the Residential Tenancy Branch should further explore how to ensure email notifications are received within the specific legal requirements and appropriate deadlines for the different types of notices, such as notices of rent increases.

Recommendation 18: Speed up the return of damage deposits to tenants by allowing tenants to make a direct request to the Residential Tenancy Branch for the damage deposit where no damage has been found and reported by the landlord.

A direct request is an accelerated process where the Residential Tenancy Branch issues an order or decision without going through a full dispute resolution hearing. Currently, the Residential Tenancy Act gives rental housing providers the ability to submit a direct request in certain circumstances, such as when a tenant has not paid their rent.

The Task Force recommends expanding this process to allow tenants the ability to make a direct request in the event their damage deposit is not returned within the timeframe specified in the Act. Under the current process, tenants are required to go through the conventional dispute resolution process to recover damage deposits that are being withheld without cause.

During the engagement process, the Task Force heard from renters that delays in the return of damage deposits pose a serious financial challenge, in particular when needing to provide a damage deposit to a new landlord. In a written submission in support of allowing direct requests for tenants, the City of Vancouver suggested that, *"It takes approximately 7 months from the dates of an application to have a hearing for an order that a landlord return a security deposit where they are improperly withholding it."*

Expanding the direct request process to include damage deposits would fast track the return of damage deposits not returned in accordance with the Act. This amendment would go further to increase efficiency within the dispute resolution process by allowing arbitrators the ability to focus on matters of greater complexity that require a complete hearing.

Recommendation 19: Work with the insurance industry to see if rent guarantee insurance, and other improvements to insurance coverage, might be provided for landlords in B.C.

Rental housing providers made a strong case for improved private-sector insurance services for landlords in British Columbia. Some pointed to the challenges they have collecting rent if a tenant refuses to pay, and asked if the Province could support efforts to bring in rent guarantee insurance as exists in the UK and Ontario.

Through the online forum, a landlord from Vancouver Island wrote, *"We suggest that there should be a tenant's insurance that would kick in to cover costs not covered by the deposit. Like ICBC it could reward good tenants with lower premiums and also provide 'tenant's abstracts,' like a reference for landlords."* This landlord went on to share how their last tenant disappeared without notice, leaving the landlord with unpaid rent and clean-up costs.

Recommendation 20: Undertake a review to simplify the regulations relating to a landlord's obligation to store abandoned personal property.

During the engagement process, the Task Force heard many concerns from rental housing providers that the requirements to store abandoned property are problematic. As such, the Task Force is recommending a review of the regulations relating to a landlord's obligation to store abandoned personal property.

The Task Force heard that, *"The requirement to keep and store abandoned contents and possessions, to bear that cost and then the cost of disposal [is too much for landlords]."* Rental housing providers also suggested that the value amount that requires landlords to store abandoned property (\$500) is too low and the time to allow tenants to claim it (60 days) is too long.

Current legislation requires the landlord to provide proper notice before disposing of a tenant's personal items if the value of the items is worth \$500 or more. The landlord can consider items to be abandoned if they are left behind after a tenancy has ended for 30 days. Depending on the total value of the abandoned property, the landlord may need to store the items in a safe place for 60 days to allow the tenant a chance to claim them. If a tenant doesn't claim their items within 60 days, the landlord must follow a specific process for getting rid of the abandoned items. This process needs to be revisited to address fairness for housing providers.

The Residential Tenancy Act needs to "cover all forms of housing, especially non-profit and supportive housing".

Recommendation 21: Ensure it is clear for all landlords and renters where to go to get help for all forms of residential tenancy.

The Residential Tenancy Act provides regulations to support and protect the rights of both rental housing providers and tenants, with the goal of ensuring that all tenancy business is conducted properly and fairly.

Many participants voiced concerns that the Residential Tenancy Act needs to, “*cover all forms of housing, especially non-profit and supportive housing*”. Another participant noted that, “*Roommate living is not covered by the law, it is very complex, and it is not covered in dispute resolution – [roommate disputes] go to small claims [court].*”

Currently, there are some areas of housing, including roommate, or co-tenant situations that may not fall under the Act. It is important that people know where they can go for help if their rights are not being respected. The Residential Tenancy Branch and the Civil Resolution Tribunal need to clarify which body has jurisdiction to help people in these situations have access to justice.

Student housing is not currently under the Residential Tenancy Act. It is recommended that the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training work with the students, student-housing providers and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to establish common standards and policies to better protect students’ rights.

Additionally, it is recommended that the Province examine the role of the Residential Tenancy Act, the Residential Tenancy Branch and the Ministry of Health with respect to unregulated seniors’ independent-living housing, to ensure their specific circumstances are able to be met under the laws, regulations and policies of the Residential Tenancy Branch.

Recommendation 22: Address the specific needs of non-profit housing and supportive housing providers in the Residential Tenancy Act.

During the engagement process, non-profit housing providers and advocates raised concerns about the lack of clarity in the Residential Tenancy Act for non-profit housing. Many cited a need to modernize the Act and ensure it recognizes the complexities of non-profit housing to provide better protection to both providers and tenants.

As operating agreements change or expire, there were concerns raised that non-profits might be unable to ensure those receiving subsidized housing are appropriate for the housing based on income, family size and other factors. The Task Force recommends the Residential Tenancy Branch work with non-profit housing providers to ensure the Residential Tenancy Act addresses these concerns.

Supportive housing providers also asked for the Act to be modernized to reflect the growing complexity of providing supportive housing: for example, the need to do wellness checks in housing for people dealing with substance-use challenges.

MANUFACTURED HOME PARK TENANCY ACT (MHPTA) RECOMMENDATIONS

The duty of the Rental Housing Task Force was to identify challenges and potential solutions related to tenancy-related legislation from the perspective of British Columbians, including manufactured-home park owners and renters.

The government recently brought in changes to the MHPTA that provide stronger protections for people affected by manufactured home park closures by:

- ensuring the effective date of a 12-month notice to end tenancy is the same for all tenancy agreements under the Act;
- increasing the amount of compensation landlords pay tenants who have been given a notice to end tenancy, in order to convert a park;
- increasing the amount of compensation that a landlord owes a former tenant if the landlord gave notice, but did not do the conversion;
- providing additional compensation if a manufactured home cannot be relocated; and
- clarifying that a tenant who is unable to relocate their manufactured home is not responsible for disposal costs of the home.

Recommendation 23: Ensure Manufactured Home Park rules are clear and understandable. Clarify what occurs when park rules conflict with lease or contract rules.

The Task Force recommends reviewing the existing legislation and regulations on manufactured home park rules to include guidelines about what park rules may and may not do, the amount of notice needed for rule changes and provide guidance on what occurs if park rules conflict with lease or contract rules.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Pets

While Task Force members heard the desires of pet owners to require rental housing providers to allow pets as a way to increase the supply of pet-friendly housing, members also heard from many renters and rental housing providers who did not support this legal change.

Concerns were raised about allergies, damage and disturbances to other renters. Some housing providers indicated that they would rather remove homes from the rental market than be forced to allow people with pets to rent their properties.

The Task Force believes renters with pets deserve to find homes that fit their families and hopes more rental housing providers, including BC Housing and non-profits working with the government, choose to allow pets in their rental accommodations. However, at this time, the Task Force was not persuaded that requiring all rental housing providers to allow pets would be fair for landlords or for renters who want or need to live in pet-free buildings.

CONCLUSION

Throughout its work, the Rental Housing Task Force sought to balance the interests of renters and landlords, and make recommendations to help ensure our rental laws are fairer for all. The Task Force firmly believe that the system works best when everyone follows the rules and works together, not just for their own benefit, but for the benefit of everyone involved.

The vast majority of renters are conscientious and respectful of their landlords and the homes they have made their own. The vast majority of landlords are hard-working business owners providing an important service fairly and compassionately.

Our regulations and laws are meant to protect everyone. They are there to guide acceptable standards for behaviour and apply consequences for those who fail to meet those standards. Weak and ineffective laws, or laws that are not enforced, create a climate of rule-breaking and give people a false sense of entitlement to act in ways that are anti-social or damaging to others.

The Rental Housing Task Force believes strengthening our rental tenancy laws and regulations and making sure that disputes are settled quickly and fairly will bring a greater sense of security to everyone involved in the rental housing market.

That security is needed to give rental housing providers the confidence to put their homes up for rent. And it's needed for tenants, so they can feel comfortable making themselves at home and settling in with their families for the long-term.

It is the Task Force's hope that the recommendations in this report will make rental housing and the residential tenancy system better, more secure and fairer for all.



BRITISH COLUMBIA
RENTAL HOUSING TASK FORCE

PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

WHAT WE HEARD

Appendix A



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The photograph shows a meeting room with a large projector screen at the front. The screen displays a presentation titled 'Tonight's Agenda' with a list of topics and a colorful cityscape illustration at the bottom. In the foreground, a sign on a table reads 'Renters' in blue text, with a colorful cityscape graphic on its left side. A black marker lies on the table in front of the sign. The room has a brick wall, two wall-mounted speakers, and a service counter in the background.

Renters

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Province of British Columbia's Rental Housing Task Force conducted community engagement between May 28 and July 6, 2018 to identify, from the perspective of British Columbians, challenges and potential solutions related to tenancy-related legislation and processes. Engagement focused on hearing from renters, rental housing providers and other housing-related stakeholders from across the province. The Task Force will use this report to prepare findings and make recommendations to Premier Horgan and Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Selina Robinson in Fall 2018.

1.1 THREE METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT USED TO OBTAIN FEEDBACK

1. Housing-related organizations were invited to meet with the Task Force during the month of May and/or invited to provide written submissions;
2. Community meetings were held in 11 communities around the province (Burnaby, Kelowna, Maple Ridge, Nanaimo, Nelson, Prince George, Salt Spring Island, Surrey, Terrace, Vancouver and Victoria); and
3. B.C. citizens were invited to provide their input through an online discussion and/or email.

1.2 ENGAGEMENT PROCESS GARNERED BROAD PARTICIPATION

- 22 stakeholder meetings
- 57 written submissions
- 1,431 comments received through online dialogue
- 331 email submissions
- 788 citizens participated in 11 in-person community meetings throughout the province
- 6,848 individual comments received at community meetings

I'm very concerned with the possibility of reducing or eliminating damage deposits. For those tenants that damage the property, one month's rent often doesn't cover costs.

■ Community Meeting, Rental Housing Provider, Victoria



1.3 TOP MENTIONED CHALLENGES BY ROLE

1.3.1 Top Mentioned Challenges For Rental Housing Providers

1. Difficulty evicting renters
2. Unsupportive or difficult to use Residential Tenancy Branch processes
3. Insufficient damage deposits to cover renter-caused damages
4. Dealing with difficult or abusive renters
5. Insufficient tools or legal means to adequately screen prospective renters

1.3.2 Top Mentioned Challenges For Renters

1. Inadequate maintenance and building conditions of rental homes
2. Difficult or abusive rental housing providers
3. Low vacancy rates/supply
4. Unfair or illegal evictions
5. Lack of affordability

1.3.3 Top Mentioned Challenges For Manufactured Home Park Owners

1. The high cost of maintaining Manufactured Home Parks
2. The inability to properly screen mobile park renters
3. The lack of damage deposits to cover park damage caused by manufactured home owners
4. Poorly maintained trailers and property
5. Age restrictions in 55+ parks

1.3.4 Top Mentioned Challenges For Manufactured Home Owners

1. Costs and difficulty of removing a home following an eviction
2. Overly restrictive park rules and regulations
3. High rent increases

1.4 TOP MENTIONED SOLUTIONS BY ROLE

1.4.1 Top Mentioned Solutions By Rental Housing Providers

1. Improve the Residential Tenancy Branch processes
2. Create a centralized database to screen potential renters
3. Remove barriers and increase incentives to rent
4. Streamline/improve the eviction process
5. Increase allowable damage deposits to cover costs of damage

1.4.2 Top Mentioned Solutions By Renters

1. Increase the rental supply and protect the existing rental stock
2. Take steps to ensure affordability
3. Better enforcement of renter rights
4. Stop unfair and/or illegal evictions
5. Improve the Residential Tenancy Branch processes

1.4.3 Top Mentioned Solutions By Manufactured Home Park Owners

1. Prohibit home rental pad assignments
2. Stipulate renters must keep their homes and property well maintained
3. Reduce age requirement at 55+ parks to 50
4. Require older, ill-maintained trailers to be updated or moved

1.4.4 Top Mentioned Solutions By Manufactured Home Owners

1. Allow more time to move a home after eviction
2. More control over assignments and subletting
3. Rental increases tied to costs

Renters in this market are incredibly vulnerable and are at a massive disadvantage in any type of conflict or issue with a landlord.

■ Online Forum, Renter, Mainland/Southwest



1.5 DEFINING THE TERMS

Community meeting participants were invited to define what four key terms mean to them: fair process, safe, secure and affordable. For the most part, renters and rental housing providers agreed that fair process meant clear, consistent, transparent and equitable processes for managing the tenancy relationship. Similarly, renters and rental housing providers indicated that the concept of safety relates mainly to physical, environmental and emotional safety. However, in defining what secure means, renters focused mainly on the concept of long-term tenure whereas rental housing providers focused more on the long-term protection and security of their property and investments. The concept of affordable for renters related mainly to the proportion of income being spent on rent (i.e. not more than 30%) whereas affordable for rental housing providers had more to do with the ability to cover their costs and receive a reasonable rate of return on investments.

1.6 COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

When asked to identify their preferred method of communication, participants at community meetings overwhelmingly indicated their desire to receive communication through direct email notices.



2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 BACKGROUND

With rental vacancy so low across the province (1.3%), the B.C. Government wants to make sure renters have secure housing and rental housing providers have the confidence to make their properties available for rent, helping to increase housing availability and affordability.

One-and-a-half million British Columbians rent. The B.C. Government believes that reviewing tenancy legislation and the work of the Residential Tenancy Branch together will provide a stronger system for all involved. The desire is also to build greater understanding of everyone's rights and responsibilities, helping to avoid conflicts in the renter/rental housing provider relationship.

In April 2018, Premier John Horgan appointed a Rental Housing Task Force that will advise on how to improve security and fairness for renters and rental housing providers throughout the province.

The Task Force is led by Vancouver-West End MLA Spencer Chandra Herbert, who serves as the Premier's Advisor on Residential Tenancy. Chandra Herbert is working alongside MLAs Adam Olsen and Ronna-Rae Leonard on the three-member Task Force.



Ronna-Rae Leonard, MLA



Adam Olsen, MLA



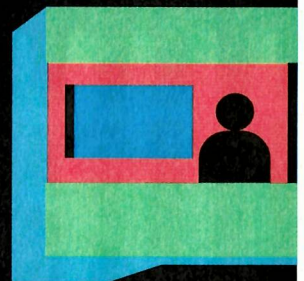
Spencer Chandra Herbert, MLA

The Rental Housing Task Force's work includes:

1. Talking to the public, rental housing providers, renters and stakeholders on their views and experiences with current tenancy laws and processes
2. Speaking with manufactured home park renters and owners about improvements to manufactured home park legislation
3. Identifying options to improve security and fairness for both renters and rental housing providers, while addressing the challenges of affordability
4. A review of the existing laws and how they apply to different housing situations
5. A review of innovative approaches in other jurisdictions

Complaint process is almost impossible to use for a tenant in a small town – blacklisting.

■ Community Meeting, Renter, Nelson



2.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of the community engagement was to identify, from the perspective of those experiencing the issues, challenges and potential solutions related to tenancy-related legislation and processes. Engagement was focused on renters, rental housing providers and other housing-related stakeholders from across the province.

2.3 PROJECT TEAM

The project team for the Rental Housing Task Force public and stakeholder engagement was led by the Chair of the Task Force and included Government Communication and Public Engagement (GCPE) representatives and BC Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) staff as well as a team of consultants from Urban Systems Ltd. Rental Housing Task Force members, as well as many government team members, supported the design and delivery of this project and participated in all of the engagement activities.

2.4 SCHEDULE

This public engagement was completed between May 28 and July 6, 2018. Engagement with provincial organizations took place in May 2018, while online discussions and in-person engagement at 11 locations across the province took place in June and July 2018. The Task Force will use this report to prepare findings and make recommendations to Premier Horgan and Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Selina Robinson in fall 2018.

2.5 ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report represents the summary results of public engagement that was completed as part of the Task Force mandate. It includes a record of findings from all sources of public input including stakeholder meetings conducted by the Task Force and written stakeholder submissions, online dialogue, email submissions and in-person community meetings held in 11 cities across the province.

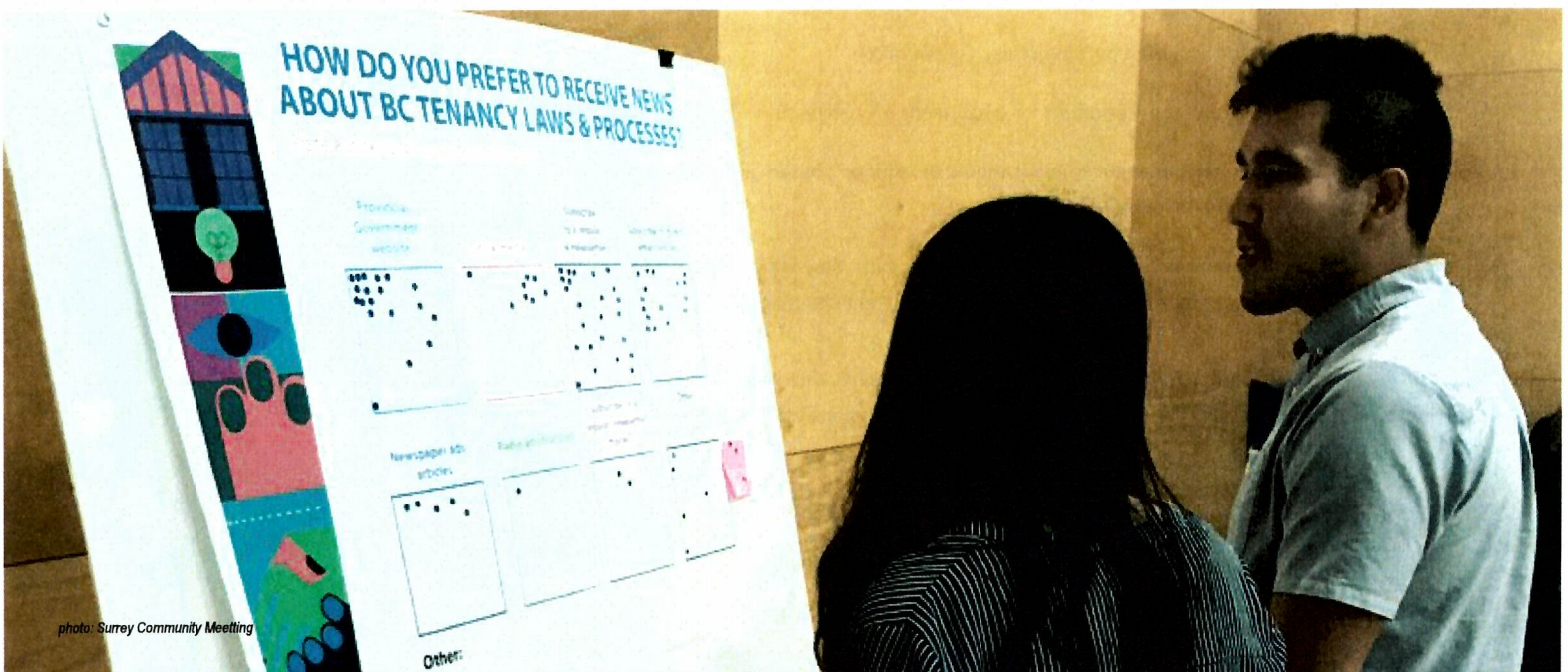


photo: Surrey Community Meeting

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE AND INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

The Task Force engaged with stakeholders and the public from May 28 to July 6, 2018. The process involved several opportunities to participate, as described below.

- Housing-related organizations were invited to meet with the Task Force during the month of May and/or invited to provide written submissions.
- 11 community meetings were held around the province in Burnaby, Kelowna, Maple Ridge, Nanaimo, Nelson, Prince George, Salt Spring Island, Surrey, Terrace, Vancouver and Victoria.
- B.C. citizens were invited to provide their input through an online discussion and/or email.

3.2 STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Provincial housing organizations were invited to meet with the Task Force throughout the month of May. These meetings were 30 minutes in length, either face-to-face at the B.C. Legislature in Victoria or by teleconference. Notes were taken at all meetings so that there was a record of the discussion, and a timekeeper made sure the meetings ended on schedule.

Stakeholders were asked to prepare a written submission no longer than five pages and to submit it before their meeting to allow the Task Force enough time to read their perspective and ask questions at the meeting.

These meetings covered:

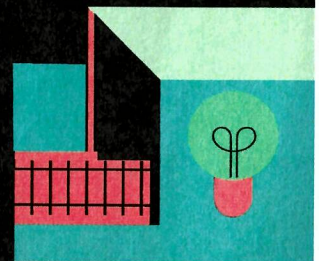
- Introductions and a brief purpose of each organization
- The organization's top 3 priorities for what needs to change
- Ideas and solutions that government should be exploring based on examples of what may be working in other jurisdictions

If the organization's representatives were unable to participate they were given the ability to provide their perspectives by emailing a written submission to rentalhousing.taskforce@gov.bc.ca.

For transparency, all organization's submissions are made public online and can be accessed here: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/rentalhousingtaskforce/submissions-from-organizations/>

Offer tax incentives for people to add AND
MAINTAIN a rental suite. Provide resources and
support for new landlords who might be nervous
about bad tenants or unsure of their responsibilities.

■ Online Forum, Renter, Mainland/Southwest



3.3 ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

British Columbians had the opportunity to participate in two online discussion forums between May 28 and July 6. The discussion forums welcomed candid dialogue and diverse views from around the province. To ensure that all forum users were able to participate in an exchange of information and ideas in a positive, constructive and beneficial way, the content submitted was moderated by the B.C. government Citizens Engagement team before being posted.

3.3.1 Discussion Forum Questions

Forum users were invited to provide feedback on the following two questions:

1. While most renter-rental housing provider relationships are working well, at times difficult and complex situations can arise between parties to the rental contract. What suggestions do you have, as either a rental housing provider or renter, for how government should build a more fair and balanced system for both parties?
2. Being careful not to identify personal information of others, tell us about your experience being either a rental housing provider or renter that you would like the Rental Task Force to consider as we proceed with making recommendations to the Premier and Minister Robinson on changes.

3.4 COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The Task Force hosted in-person public meetings in 11 communities across the province throughout the month of June. The primary audience for these sessions was rental housing providers/property managers and renters. Conducted in a facilitated workshop style, the community meetings served as an opportunity to share perspectives with the goal of identifying challenges and potential solutions for the Task Force to consider before making their recommendations.

The community meetings began with a brief introduction by member(s) of the Task Force. Participants were then provided an overview of the workshop format by the lead facilitator, as described below.

3.4.1 Breakout Sessions Format

The community meetings were designed to allow participants the time and space to share their experiences and ideas in a safe and inclusive environment, while ensuring everyone's voice was heard. This was achieved through two breakout sessions, in which participants shared their perspectives in small groups representing similar lived experiences – either from the lens of a renter or rental housing provider. Each group recorded their comments to questions using post-it notes, which were subsequently collected by roaming facilitators and posted on large posters at the front of the room. As the comments were received, the input was organized into themes before being shared back to the room.

3.4.2 Breakout Session #1

The first breakout session was structured to gain a better understanding of the issues faced by renters and rental housing providers across the province, as well as potential solutions to be considered by the Task Force.

Participants were asked:

1. What challenges have you experienced with B.C. tenancy laws and processes?
2. What potential solution might address the challenges you experience?

To help guide and stimulate discussion, participants were invited to consider the various phases within the timeline of the tenancy relationship, including beginning the tenancy, maintaining the tenancy and ending the tenancy.

3.4.3 Breakout Session #2

The B.C. government is committed to ensuring tenancy laws and processes reflect fair process, as well as safe, secure and affordable housing for both renters and rental housing providers. To do that, the Task Force wanted to have a clear picture of what these terms mean to renters and rental housing providers/property managers. Each participant was asked to describe in a few words what each term means to them, again using post-it notes.

3.4.4 Dotmocracy Exercises

Participants were invited to engage in two “dotmocracy” exercises where they individually voted on their highest priorities related to the following questions using sticky dots provided:

1. What is your #1 preference for receiving information about B.C. tenancy laws?
(Provincial Government website, social media, subscribe to regular e-newsletter, subscribe to direct email notices, subscribe to a regular newsletter (mailed), newspaper ads/articles, radio ads/features)
2. What three solutions are most important to you?
(Based on the themes identified by the facilitators and reported back to participants during each session)

There needs to be serious rental rate caps! Based on age, location, condition etc... It's gotten way to out of hand.

■ Online Forum, Renter, Mainland/Southwest

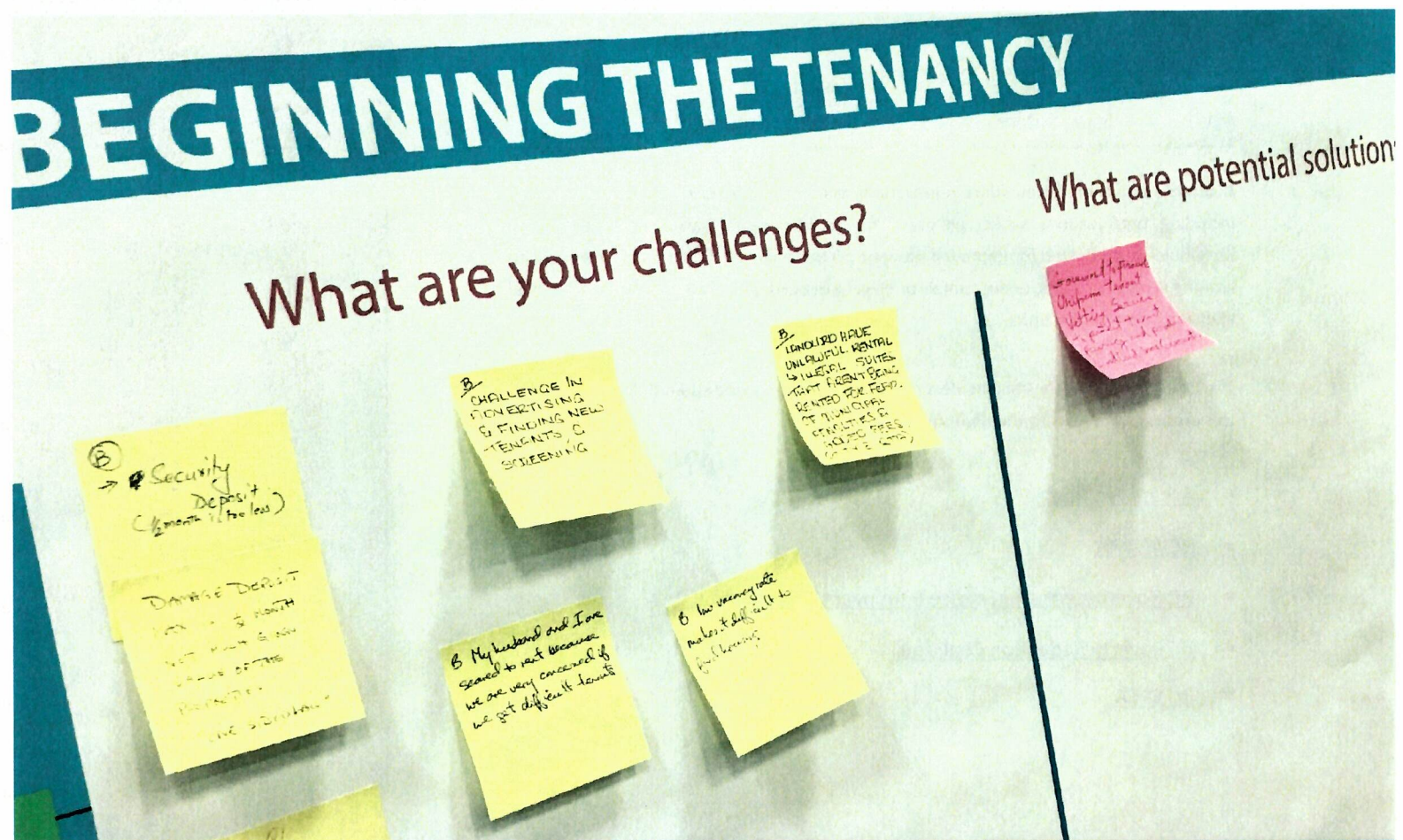


3.5 PARTICIPATION - BY THE NUMBERS

Table 1 below shows the distribution of attendees at the 11 community meetings throughout the province.

Table 1. Community Meeting Locations, Dates and Number of Attendees

Location	Date	Number of Attendees
Maple Ridge	June 4	33
Nanaimo	June 6	58
Kelowna	June 12	111
Nelson	June 14	56
Terrace	June 18	30
Prince George	June 20	37
Salt Spring Island	June 22	34
Victoria	June 26	115
Burnaby	June 27	119
Vancouver	June 27	100
Surrey	June 28	95



4. WHAT WE HEARD

4.1 WHAT WE HEARD FROM STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS & SUBMISSIONS

The Task Force heard from stakeholders through in-person meetings and written submissions. Input was received from a range of organizations representing the interests of renters, rental housing providers, mobile home owners and park owners, and local governments. Common recommendations among stakeholders include:

- Improvements to the Residential Tenancy Branch with strengthened enforcement provisions and more consistency and transparency in hearings
- Fairness and transparency in cost increases, though renters and rental housing providers had different concerns for how the Residential Tenancy Act addressed rent increases
- Updates to the Residential Tenancy Act to better reflect different types of rental housing (e.g., student, supportive housing, seniors, strata) and living arrangements (e.g., roommates, boarding)

Overviews of these submissions and links to each submission are provided below.

4.1.1 Stakeholders Representing Renters' Interests

A diverse range of stakeholders representing renters' interests provided submissions, including organizations which advocate for renters, health and safety, and pets. Stakeholders advocated for improved protections for renters, including but not limited to limiting rental increases, ending unfair or illegal evictions, preventing discrimination, and allowing pets in rental units.

The list below shows the stakeholders representing renters who submitted input through this process, with links to their full submission.

- [Access Pro Bono](#)
- [BC ACORN](#)
- [BC Government and Service Employees' Union](#)
- [BC Poverty Reduction Coalition](#)
- [BC SPCA](#)

Tenant must pay rent even during dispute resolution process.

■ Community Meeting, Rental Housing Provider, Burnaby



- [BC Student Housing Working Group](#)
- [Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives](#)
- [CARST](#)
- [Clean Air Coalition of BC](#)
- [Community Legal Assistance Society](#)
- [Nelson CARES – The Advocacy Centre](#)
- [Office of the Seniors Advocate](#)
- [Gerald Rotering](#)
- [Lancaster Gate Apartments](#)
- [Langley Seniors Community Action Table](#)
- [Pets OK BC](#)
- [Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada](#)
- [Regional Animal Protection Society](#)
- [Renters At Risk](#)
- [Tenant Resource Advisory Centre](#)
- [Thompson Rivers University Students' Union](#)
- [Together Against Poverty Society](#)
- [United Food and Commercial Workers Union](#)
- [Vancouver Tenants Union](#)
- [Vancouver Tenants Union – Summary of Recommendations](#)
- [Victoria Tenant Action Group](#)

4.1.2 Stakeholders Representing Rental Housing Providers' Interests

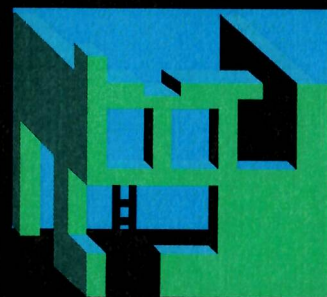
Stakeholders representing the interests of rental housing providers were also diverse, including both non-profit and for-profit housing providers, builders' associations and advocacy groups. Submissions advocated for clarity and balance between the rights of renters and rental housing providers; allowing rent increases and damage deposits that aligned with costs; and improving the evictions processes, including reintroducing a vacate clause. Rental housing providers also supported increasing the rental supply, including incentivizing rentals, reducing restrictions on secondary suites, and reducing property tax burden on rental housing providers.

The list below shows the stakeholders representing rental housing providers who submitted input through this process, with links to their full submission.

- [A.G. Kemp & Associates](#)
- [Anthem Properties](#)
- [BC Non-Profit Housing Association](#)
- [BC Real Estate Association](#)
- [Belmont Properties](#)
- [Canadian Home Builders Association of BC](#)
- [Canadian Mortgage Brokers Association British Columbia](#)
- [Cascadia Apartment Rentals](#)
- [Condominium Home Owners Association](#)
- [Greater Vancouver Home Builders Association](#)
- [Greater Victoria Housing Society](#)
- [Hollyburn Properties Limited](#)
- [LandlordBC](#)
- [Professional Association of Managing Agents](#)
- [QuadReal Property Group](#)
- [REALPAC](#)
- [Redbrick Properties](#)
- [The Pacific Investment Corporation Limited](#)
- [The Revill Group](#)
- [Unique Real Estate Accommodations](#)
- [Urban Development Institute](#)

Mandatory education for anyone wanting to rent out a suite and be a landlord. Too often I hear about landlords overstepping boundaries.

■ Online Forum, Renter



4.1.3 Stakeholders Representing Manufactured Home Owners' and Park Owners' Interests

Stakeholders representing the interests of manufactured home owners and park owners felt that the current legislative context does not reflect the reality that manufactured home owners are both home owners and renters, and that the success of a park is a shared investment between the park owner and manufactured home owners. Home owners advocated for rent increases based on demonstrated actual cost increases; more time to vacate following an eviction; and more control over the assignment and subletting of rental pads, reflecting the nature of a manufactured home as an investment. Park owners advocated for allowing rent increases that reflect their costs and updating the tenancy assignment provisions in the Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act to reflect those in the Residential Tenancy Act.

The list below shows the stakeholders representing manufactured home owners and park owners who submitted input through this process, with links to their full submission.

- [Active Manufactured Home Owners Association](#)
- [Manufactured Home Park Owners Association](#)
- [Omineca Mobile Home Park](#)
- [Surrey Active Manufactured Home Owners Association](#)

4.1.4 Government Stakeholders

Several submissions were received from government representatives. These submissions discussed the impact the rental crisis was having on B.C. communities and offered recommendations for increasing housing supply, reducing unfair evictions and supporting displaced renters. These can be found at the links below.

- [Bowinn Ma, MLA](#)
- [City of Vancouver](#)
- [George Heyman, MLA](#)
- [Trustee Tony Law, Hornby Island](#)
- [UBCM](#)
- [Village of Queen Charlotte](#)

4.2 WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE ONLINE DIALOGUE

A high-level summary of the data showed the breakdown of the number of comments that were received according to the region, role (renter, rental housing provider, etc.), and by tag (or issue) associated to the comment (see Tables 2-4).

Table 2. Summary Table of Comments by Region

Breakdown by Region	Count
Mainland/Southwest	667
Vancouver Island/Coast	322
Thompson Okanagan	113
Kootenay	23
North Coast	14
Cariboo	13
Northeast	4
Nechako	3
Northwest	2
Other	0
Surrey	95

Table 3. Summary Table of Comments by Role

Breakdown by Role	Count
Renter	678
Small Rental Housing Provider	453
Advocate	78
Manufactured Home Owner	29
Commercial Rental Housing Provider	29
Community Organization	18
Manufactured Home Park Owner	12
Not-for Profit Housing Provider	10
Local Government	2
Other	0
Surrey	95

The majority of comments were received from participants based in the Mainland/Southeast, Vancouver Island/Coast and Thompson Okanagan (see Table 2). Most comments were received from renters and small rental housing providers (see Table 3 above).

The most frequently used words in the online comments included: pets, affordability, rent control, eviction, security deposits, supply, dispute resolution, enforcement, rental housing provider incentives and Residential Tenancy Branch operations (see Table 4).

Of Note: comments regarding pets garnered the highest count – more than twice as many comments (505) than the second most popular issue of affordability (212) (see Table 4). The high number of pet-related comments may be due to a campaign by one advocacy organization that encouraged people to comment on this issue. The anomaly of receiving such a high number of pet-related comments online, compared to other issues, is further underscored by reviewing comments received during the in-person community meetings, where the topic of pets garnered far fewer comments compared to other issues.

“Fair” would not have a policy or pet exclusion based on assumptions but rather assume compliance and deal with exceptions.

■ Community Meeting, Renter, Prince George

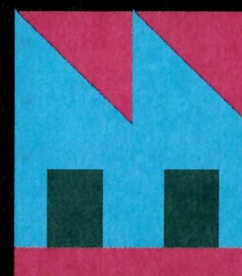


Table 4. Summary Table of Comments by Issues/Tags

Issue/Tag	# of Comments Received Per Issue
1. Pets	505
2. Affordability	212
3. Rent Control	193
4. Eviction	156
5. Security Deposits	120
6. Supply	119
7. Dispute Resolution	104
8. Enforcement	101
9. Rental Housing Provider Incentives	96
10. RTB Operations	87
11. Vacate Clause	69
12. Discrimination	62
13. Seniors	54

Issue/Tag	# of Comments Received Per Issue
14. Renovictions	43
15. Public Education	30
16. Registry	27
17. Vacation Rental	27
18. Income Assistance	27
19. Insurance	26
20. Rental Housing Provider Use of Property	24
21. Strata	19
22. Speculation Tax	17
23. Smoking - Cannabis	16
24. MHPTA	16
25. Smoking - Tobacco	11
26. Student Housing	7

As described in Table 5, a short list of the ten most frequently mentioned issues were identified for further analysis. These were described according to the nature of the comments in which the issue was identified and are summarized below (see Table 5).



photo: royalty-free stock image from pixabay.com

Table 5. Short List of Top Issues Identified on the Online Forum with Description

Issue	Count	Description
Pets	505	Currently, pets are allowed in a rental unit at the rental housing provider's discretion. Renters argue they should not be restricted from having pets in a rental unit without reason. Rental housing providers believe that it should remain a right for them to raise the damage deposit for pets or restrict them altogether.
Affordability	212	Renters feel there is not enough affordable housing in the province, especially in the Lower Mainland and Victoria. Rental housing providers feel that the costs related to a bad renter makes renting a financial burden.
Rent Control	193	The current rent control law in British Columbia is 2% + inflation every 12 months. Renters feel the rent control laws should be tightened because wages have not kept up with the rising costs of housing. Rental housing providers want the restrictions to be reduced because of the costs associated with maintenance and operations.
Eviction	156	Eviction, in this case, refers to a rental housing provider ending a tenancy for cause, failure to pay rent or renovation. Many renters believe they should have more time before the order of possession takes effect to vacate their unit. Rental housing providers feel the process is too difficult, time-consuming and costly.
Security Deposits	120	Security deposits refers to monies collected at the beginning of a tenancy that a rental housing provider can use to cover damages. Rental housing providers suggest that security deposits are insufficient to cover the repairs and cleaning required after a tenancy ends.
Supply	119	Supply refers to the amount of housing available. Renters are concerned there is not enough housing in urban areas that is affordable. Rental housing providers have stated that the increase in restrictions against them is affecting the supply. One of the most common restrictions rental housing providers cite is rent control.
Dispute Resolution	104	Dispute resolution refers to the Residential Tenancy Branch's arbitration system. Rental housing providers feel that the results are often skewed in the favour of renters. Both feel that wait times are too long and the process is not transparent enough. Example suggestion: hearings should be recorded and posted.
Enforcement	101	Rental housing providers are concerned that orders of possession in the case of eviction cannot easily be enforced. Renters are concerned about rental housing providers ignoring repair orders and maintenance issues.
Rental Housing Provider Incentives	96	Rental housing provider incentives refers to good rental housing providers being rewarded and bad rental housing providers being punished. Example suggestion: good rental housing providers should receive property tax breaks and bad rental housing providers receive fines.
Residential Tenancy Branch Operations	87	Residential Tenancy Branch operations refers to how the Residential Tenancy Branch and legislation within its jurisdiction are managed. Rental housing providers feel that the legislation unfairly protects renters' rights, while not protecting rental housing providers. Example suggestion: split legislation to differentiate between commercial and small rental housing providers.

As a once young married couple, we were allowed pets in our rental. We made sure our pets made no damage. As landlords now, we allow pets in our rentals, and have had no issues. Pets are important family members.

■ Online Forum, Rental Housing Provider, Kootenay



To further understand the comments that were received, we analyzed the data for each question, across the previously mentioned variables (region, role, tag/issue). The data was analyzed to answer the following three questions:

- Where are the issues most felt geographically?
- What roles are important by geographic region?
- How are issues being felt based on roles?

4.2.1 DISCUSSION QUESTION 1: What suggestions do you have, as either a rental housing provider or renter, for how government should build a more fair and balanced system for both parties?

For the first discussion question, participants were asked to provide suggestions. The first level of analysis was to categorize these suggestions by region. As can be seen in Table 6. The larger regions (Mainland/Southeast, Vancouver Island/Coast, and Thompson Okanagan) attracted greater levels of response related to each of the topic areas.

Table 6. Top Comments (Suggestions) According to Regional Location

	Cariboo	Kootenay	Mainland/ Southwest	Nechako	North Coast	North East	North West	Thompson Okanagan	Vancouver Island/ Coast
Pets	8	8	226	1	1	1	1	32	108
Affordability	1	2	73	0	1	2	0	8	38
Rent Control	2	0	73	0	0	1	0	9	27
Eviction	2	2	34	0	0	0	0	12	31
Security Deposits	1	1	49	0	0	0	1	6	17
Supply	2	2	41	1	1	0	0	7	14
Dispute Resolution	0	0	30	0	0	1	0	13	20
Enforcement	0	0	31	1	0	0	0	10	20
Rental Housing Provider Incentives	1	0	21	0	0	1	0	11	14
RTB Operations	0	0	27	0	0	1	0	9	11

Subsequently, the comments were analyzed according to the role of commenters and based on their geographic location (see Table 7). Renters had the highest number of comments, which were concentrated to the regions with the most overall comments (Mainland/Southeast, Vancouver Island/Coast and Thompson Okanagan). Though there were less comments from small rental housing providers (than renters), the comments were slightly more geographically spread out.

Table 7. Number of Comments (Suggestions) According to Role and Regional Location

	Cariboo	Kootenay	Mainland/ Southwest	Nechako	North Coast	North East	North West	Thompson Okanagan	Vancouver Island/ Coast
Renter	1	6	294	0	2	2	0	23	133
Small Rental Housing Provider	5	3	125	2	9	1	0	33	82
Advocate	1	0	30	0	0	0	0	6	20
Manufactured Home Owner	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	4	5
Commercial Rental Housing Provider	0	0	5	0	0	1	0	0	2
Community Organization	0	1	9	0	0	0	0	1	3
Manufactured Home Park Owner	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	1
Not-for Profit Housing Provider	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local Government	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	1	3	46	1	1	0	0	13	18

RTB should have a database for their own use to identify serial deadbeat tenants and landlords that constantly tie up RTB resources.

■ Community Meeting, Rental Housing Provider, Nanaimo



Lastly, the Discussion 1 comments were analyzed according to the role and the issues that were raised by commenters (see Table 8). While the top ten issues all occurred frequently for renters and small rental housing providers, notable differences were observed. Namely, renters had a significant number of comments concerning pets, affordability, rent control and supply, whereas small rental housing providers had a significant number of comments with respect to pets, eviction, security deposits, enforcement and rental housing provider incentives.

Table 8. Comments (Suggestions) According to Role

	Renter	Small Rental Housing Provider	Advocate	Manufactured Home Owner	Commercial Rental Housing Provider	Community Org.	Manufactured Home Park Owner	Not-for Profit Housing Provider	Local Gov.	Other
Pets	244	72	40	11	1	5	2	2	1	49
Affordability	95	29	11	4	2	4	1	1	0	9
Rent Control	81	38	6	2	2	2	0	1	0	8
Eviction	28	54	6	1	1	1	1	0	0	9
Security Deposits	31	40	5	1	2	1	0	0	0	7
Supply	37	26	7	0	3	1	0	1	0	7
Dispute Resolution	33	35	2	2	3	1	0	0	0	4
Enforcement	20	40	2	1	3	1	0	0	0	8
Rental Housing Provider Incentives	8	41	3	1	2	2	0	0	0	6
RTB Operations	31	22	1	1	3	1	0	0	0	3

The sentiments of these comments can be summarized as follows. For renters, the typical sentiments concerning top issues are:

- **Pets:** Renters argue they should not be restricted from having pets in a rental unit without reason.
- **Affordability:** Renters feel there is not enough affordable housing in the Province.
- **Rent control:** Renters feel the rent control laws should be tightened because wages have not kept up with the rising costs of housing.
- **Supply:** Renters are concerned there is not enough housing in urban areas that is affordable.

The typical sentiments for the top issues among rental housing providers are the following:

- **Pets:** Rental housing providers believe that it should remain a right for them to raise the damage deposit for pets or restrict them altogether.
- **Eviction:** Rental housing providers feel the process is too difficult, time-consuming and costly.
- **Security deposits:** Rental housing providers suggest that security deposits are insufficient to cover the repairs and cleaning required after a tenancy ends.
- **Enforcement:** Rental housing providers are concerned that orders of possession in the case of eviction cannot easily be enforced.
- **Rental housing provider incentives:** Rental housing providers feel that there should be more incentives to provide housing and that there should be rewards or punitive measures for rental housing provider responsibilities.

Make the eviction process faster. As it stands now a tenant can stay months in a rental without paying rent before they can be evicted by a bailiff and it's a very, very costly process.

■ Online Forum, Rental Housing Provider, Thompson Okanagan

4.2.2 DISCUSSION QUESTION 2: Tell us about your experience being either a rental housing provider or renter that you would like the Rental Task Force to consider.

For the second discussion question, participants were asked to describe their experiences. The data was analyzed according to the same parameters of role, region and tag (issue). The first level of analysis was to categorize these experiences by region (see Table 9). Like the results from the first discussion question, the majority of comments are concentrated in the larger regions (Mainland/Southeast, Vancouver Island/Coast and Thompson Okanagan).

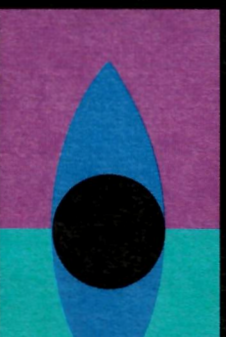
Table 9. Top Comments (Experiences) According to Regional Location

	Cariboo	Kootenay	Mainland/ Southwest	Nechako	North Coast	North East	North West	Thompson Okanagan	Vancouver Island/ Coast
Pets	9	10	261	1	1	1	1	37	119
Affordability	2	2	102	0	1	2	1	10	53
Rent Control	2	0	100	0	0	1	1	15	36
Eviction	2	4	61	0	0	0	1	17	43
Security Deposits	1	1	60	0	0	0	1	9	23
Supply	2	3	58	1	1	0	0	7	18
Dispute Resolution	0	0	40	0	0	1	0	20	27
Enforcement	0	1	43	1	0	0	0	14	29
Rental Housing Provider Incentives	1	1	40	0	0	1	0	12	19
RTB Operations	0	0	33	0	0	1	0	12	15

The second level of analysis was role by geographic location. Comments from renters were concentrated to the Mainland/ Southeast, Vancouver Island/Coast, Thompson Okanagan and Kootenay. There were less comments from small rental housing providers, but the comments were slightly more geographically spread throughout the regions (see Table 10).

Table 10. Number of Comments (Experiences) According to Role and Regional Location

	Cariboo	Kootenay	Mainland/ Southwest	Nechako	North Coast	North East	North West	Thompson Okanagan	Vancouver Island/ Coast
Renter	2	11	368	0	2	2	0	34	170
Small Rental Housing Provider	5	6	192	2	11	1	1	47	102
Advocate	2	1	35	0	0	0	0	6	23
Manufactured Home Owner	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	6	5
Commercial Rental Housing Provider	0	0	15	0	0	1	0	3	2
Community Organization	1	1	11	0	0	0	0	1	4
Manufactured Home Park Owner	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	3	4
Not-for Profit Housing Provider	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	2
Local Government	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	1	3	56	1	1	0	0	16	21



I fear we are operating from a place where the worst of the worst tenants are dictating the rental rules. I appreciate landlord's concerns about pet ownership and damage but there needs to be a mechanism to incentivize landlords to rent to good pet owners.

■ Online Forum, Renter, Cariboo

Lastly, the Discussion 2 comments were analyzed by role and by issues (see Table 11), with the same noteworthy results appearing in the analysis for the first discussion question:

- Renters had a significant number of comments concerning pets, affordability, rent control and supply.
- Small rental housing providers had a significant number of comments with respect to pets, eviction, rental housing provider incentives, enforcement and security deposits.

Table 11. Comments (Experiences) According to Role

	Renter	Small Rental Housing Provider	Advocate	Manufactured Home Owner	Commercial Rental Housing Provider	Community Org.	Manufactured Home Park Owner	Not-for Profit Housing Provider	Local Gov.	Other
Pets	283	88	41	12	2	5	2	2	1	51
Affordability	133	47	13	4	6	5	2	3	0	11
Rent Control	102	57	7	4	9	2	3	1	1	9
Eviction	50	84	7	1	5	1	1	2	0	12
Security Deposits	36	56	6	2	3	1	1	1	0	8
Supply	52	34	7	0	8	1	1	1	0	9
Dispute Resolution	48	48	2	3	4	1	1	0	0	6
Enforcement	31	60	2	1	6	2	0	1	0	9
Rental Housing Provider Incentives	12	63	3	1	6	2	0	1	0	9
RTB Operations	37	30	1	2	4	1	0	1	0	3

4.2.3 Summary of Emails Received

The Rental Housing Task Force received over 350 emails from citizens during the engagement. As with the online comments, the Task Force received emails from all around B.C. including:

- Surrey
- Vancouver
- Sooke
- Nelson
- Coquitlam
- Nanaimo
- Kamloops
- Kelowna
- Victoria
- Hornby Island
- Chilliwack
- Kitimat

COMMON THEMES on challenges and solutions covered similar topics to those found online including:

- Challenges with the Residential Tenancy Branch processes with potential solutions including: having the RTB arbitration outcomes recorded for accountability; ensuring more assistance for those with English as a second language; and, a return to the processes of the Office of the Rentalsman (1973-1983).
- Challenges with rent increases, with potential solutions including: rent increases based on annual rate of inflation (not the extra 2%), and rent increases tied to Old Age Pension increases.
- Challenges with the eviction processes, with potential solutions including: reducing the four-months required to give notice of renovations; having an appeal process for rental housing providers who live under the same roof as renters; removing the requirement for rental housing providers to be responsible for renter's belongings up to 90 days after they move out.
- Challenges with damage deposits not being sufficient to cover the costs of renter-caused damages with potential solutions being to increase the allowable amount of damage deposits; and, provide insurance that would allow rental housing providers to recoup the cost of damages.
- Challenges with unpaid utilities (that the rental housing provider is then responsible for) with a potential solution being that unpaid utilities would trigger a 10-day notice of eviction.
- Challenges with uncertainty over new cannabis legislation and the resulting effect it can have on the rental properties and other renters.
- Challenges with lack of available rental housing, with potential solutions including: making short-term online vacation rentals illegal; encouraging long-term rentals through tax breaks; making secondary suites and stratas legal to rent; removing development cost charges for new rental development; reduce/remove five-year property taxes for rental suites; zoning to allow alternate housing rentals like modular housing and tiny homes; ensure legislation recognizes that increasing barriers for rental housing providers will lead to rental housing providers opting out and an overall reduction of the amount of housing on the market.
- Challenges with lack of supportive housing for seniors with potential solutions including building more seniors housing; allowing Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) in buildings where other subsidies are; allowing tax credits to home owners who offer lowered rents; ensuring a ratio of supportive housing to market housing; and, creating "flotels" for supported housing in cities with ocean access.
- Challenges with bad renters with a potential solution being to establish a renter registry to identify those who chronically "game the system."

There should never be any repercussions from insisting your suite be properly maintained.

■ Community Meeting, Renter, Vancouver





Rental Housing Providers



4.3 WHAT WE HEARD IN 11 COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Overall, 788 participants attended the 11 community meetings. Participants' answers were collected and posted on predesigned boards at the front of the room during the sessions for summarizing and reporting back to the room. Comments received from both perspectives were kept separate for reporting out during the sessions and, later, for closer analysis and reporting. Following the in-person meetings all comments were transcribed by location and assigned to either renter or rental housing provider – and, where possible, to manufactured home park owner/renter.

Keywords were used to tabulate the 6,848 comments received during all 11 community meetings and to create common themes. A theme was identified when there were 10 or more comments that had similar sentiments/content. The summary tables below show the various themes that emerged for each question and the numbers of comments associated with each theme.

To understand the comments in a meaningful way, we analyzed the data for each question, across several variables (e.g. city, role, theme). The data was analyzed to answer a few key questions:

- How do the challenges and solutions differ based on role?
- How do the challenges and solutions differ based on role and location?
- Are there differences in how renters and rental housing providers define the terms “fair process”, “safe”, “secure” and “affordable” housing?

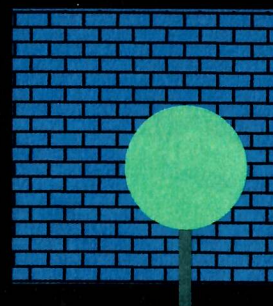
There is one noted limitation in analyzing the data. The numbers of comments assigned to themes were used to generate conclusions based on all 11 meetings. However, numbers of comments by themes were not compared location by location. This was not done for two main reasons:

1. In less populated centres, like Salt Spring Island, Terrace and Nanaimo, numbers of participants were understandably much fewer than in more populated areas such as Vancouver, Victoria and Surrey. Therefore, a lower number of comments regarding a theme in one location did not necessarily mean the issue was less of a concern than in another location.
2. During the meetings, participants were given the choice of providing comments as a table group or individually, which also influenced number of comments received in various locations.

To analyze the significance of themes at a specific location, the number of comments received within each identified theme was compared to the total number of comments received at that location.

Renters in this market are incredibly vulnerable and are at a massive disadvantage in any type of conflict or issue with a landlord.

■ Online Forum, Renter, Mainland/Southwest



4.3.1 DISCUSSION QUESTION #1: What challenges have you experienced with B.C. tenancy laws and processes?

Rental Housing Provider Challenges

Most of the 1201 comments provided by rental housing providers regarding their challenges could be categorized into 14 main themes. (Table 12 shows the themed challenges and the number of comments that related to each theme).

Table 12. Themed Challenges and Number of Comments – Rental Housing Providers

Challenges – Rental Housing Providers		# of Comments
1.	Difficulty evicting renters, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The eviction process taking too long ■ Renters refusing to leave when ordered to do so ■ The high costs of enforcing an eviction order 	219
2.	Unsupportive or difficult to use Residential Tenancy Branch processes, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A perceived bias that decisions favour renters ■ The arbitration process being long and costly ■ Lack of support for rental housing providers 	200
3.	Insufficient damage deposits, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Renters not properly caring for the home ■ Insufficient damage deposits to cover costs of renter-caused damage 	143
4.	Difficult or abusive renters, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Physical or emotional threats ■ Criminal activity ■ Harassment and intimidation 	126
5.	Difficult to properly screen renters, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of available screening tools ■ Inability to do criminal record checks ■ Required information considered private ■ Receiving false information from renters 	130
6.	Challenges associated with maintaining building condition, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Renters not reporting damages ■ Renters not allowing access to inspect and repair 	48

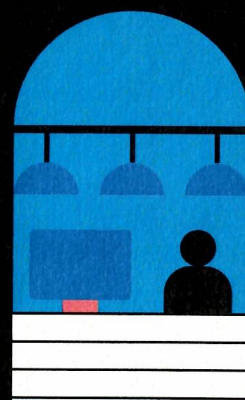
Challenges – Rental Housing Providers		# of Comments
7.	Challenges with pets, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Insufficient deposits to cover pet-caused damages ■ Pet allergies ■ Aggressive pets ■ Controlling the number of pets 	45
8.	Difficulty covering costs, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Rent controls being too limited ■ High costs of maintenance, taxes, mortgages and upgrades ■ Cost of damages 	49
9.	Insufficient/unclear tenancy-related information and communications	32
10.	Renters contravening the Residential Tenancy Act or Agreement, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of enforcement ■ Lack of support for rental housing providers to enforce agreement 	24
11.	Issues with the Residential Tenancy Act, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of clarity around rules ■ Rules not applying to all rental situations ■ Tenancy agreements not aligning with the Act 	24
12.	Lack of clarity around how upcoming marijuana regulations will affect rental housing providers	23
13.	Lack of rental supply on the market putting pressure on rental housing providers	17
14.	General challenges around rental housing provider rights and responsibilities	14

TOP 5 CHALLENGES most often mentioned by **RENTAL HOUSING PROVIDERS** across all 11 sessions included:

1. Difficulty evicting renters
2. Unsupportive or difficult to use Residential Tenancy Branch processes
3. Insufficient damage deposits to cover renter-caused damages
4. Dealing with difficult or abusive renters
5. Insufficient tools or legal means to adequately screen prospective renters

If fixed-term rentals area allowed again, maybe have some clause that states that fixed term rent prices cannot be raised over the regular allowed annual percentages when renewing or having new fixed-term rental agreements.

■ Online Forum, Rental Housing Provider, Northwest



The Most Mentioned Challenges by Rental Housing Providers by Location

The number of comments within key themes was also reviewed by location. The number of mentions within a key theme can provide some indication of the significance of the theme for participants at specific locations. For most locations, one or two key themes emerged as top concerns.

- In Maple Ridge, Nanaimo, Nelson and Victoria, one challenge was mentioned significantly more often than others:
 - Difficulty evicting renters
- In Burnaby, Kelowna, Surrey and Terrace the challenge mentioned significantly more often than the others was:
 - Unsupportive or difficult to use Residential Tenancy Branch processes
- In Prince George one challenge was mentioned significantly more often than others:
 - Insufficient damage deposits
- In Vancouver and Salt Spring Island the challenges significantly mentioned more than others were:
 - Difficult or abusive renters
 - Screening prospective renters (highest only on Salt Spring Island)

Renter Challenges

Most of the 1189 comments provided by renters regarding challenges could be categorized into 15 themes (Table 13 shows the themed challenges and the number of comments that related to each theme).

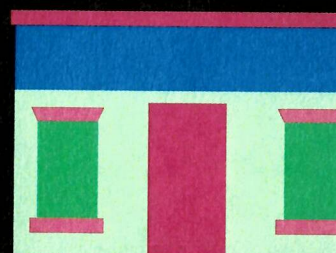
Table 13. Themed Challenges and Number of Comments - Renters

Challenges – Renters		# of Comments
1.	Inadequate maintenance and/or building condition of rental homes, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Repairs not being made in a timely manner ■ Poor living conditions (pests, mold, etc.) 	166
2.	Difficult or abusive rental housing providers, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Requests for confidential information ■ Threat of eviction ■ Disregard for the Residential Tenancy Act ■ Lack of peaceful enjoyment 	160
3.	Low vacancy rates/supply, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Difficult to find rentals ■ Power imbalance between renters and rental housing providers ■ Difficult for families with children 	132
4.	Unfair or illegal evictions, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Renovictions ■ Evictions based on false claims ■ No time to find suitable alternative housing 	118

Challenges – Renters		# of Comments
5.	Lack of affordability, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Needing to spend more than 30% of income ■ High cost of rent requiring trade-offs in paying for other basic needs ■ Rent increases exceed wage increase. 	111
6.	Ineffective Residential Tenancy Branch processes, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Poor dispute resolution and arbitration process ■ Wait times too long ■ Inconsistency and lack of transparency in hearings 	82
7.	Challenges with pets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No pets allowed ■ Pet deposits too much ■ Renters abandoning pets to accept housing 	64
8.	Discrimination during the tenant screening process, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Discriminating on basis of race, family status, economic status, pets 	64
9.	Insufficient or unclear tenancy-related education and communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Language difficult to understand ■ Hard to access information 	59
10.	Damage deposits, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Deposits too high ■ Two weeks insufficient time to negotiate return of damage deposits 	54
11.	Rental housing providers contravening the Residential Tenancy Act, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tenancy agreements that don't align with the Act ■ Lack of enforcement 	37
12.	Issues with the Residential Tenancy Act, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of clarity around rules ■ Rules don't apply to everyone (e.g. sublets) 	24
13.	Lack of tenant advocacy	17
14.	Issues with language and form of tenancy agreements	12
15.	Lack of amenities (e.g. adequate storage, bicycle parking)	10

Renters in this market are incredibly vulnerable and are at a massive disadvantage in any type of conflict or issue with a landlord.

■ Online Forum, Renter, Mainland/Southwest



TOP 5 CHALLENGES most often mentioned by **RENTERS** across all 11 sessions included:

1. Inadequate maintenance and building conditions of rental homes
2. Difficult or abusive rental housing providers
3. Low vacancy rates/supply
4. Unfair or illegal evictions
5. Lack of affordability



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The Most Mentioned Challenge by Renters by Location

For renters in Kelowna, Maple Ridge, Nanaimo, Prince George and Salt Spring Island, there was no one clear challenge that was mentioned significantly more times than other challenges. However, this was not the case for the other locations.

- In Burnaby, four challenges were mentioned significantly more often than other challenges, all four received a similar number of comments. They included:
 - Inadequate maintenance and/or building condition of rental homes
 - Difficult or abusive rental housing providers
 - Low vacancy and lack of housing options
 - Lack of affordable rental housing
- In Vancouver, three challenges were mentioned significantly more often than other challenges, all three received a similar number of comments. They included:
 - Inadequate maintenance and/or building condition of rental homes
 - Difficult or abusive rental housing providers
 - Unfair or illegal evictions
- In Victoria, two challenges were mentioned significantly more often than other challenges, both received a similar number of comments, and included:
 - Inadequate maintenance and/or building condition of rental homes
 - Difficult or abusive rental housing providers
- In Terrace, two challenges were mentioned significantly more often than other challenges, both received a similar number of comments, and included:
 - Inadequate maintenance and/or building condition of rental homes
 - Ineffective Residential Tenancy Branch process
- In Nelson, one challenge was mentioned significantly more often than any others.
 - Difficult or abusive rental housing providers

Challenges identified by Manufactured Home Park Owners and Home Owners

Manufactured home park owners and home owners identified as either rental housing providers or renters at the meetings but also indicated when their comments were specific to manufactured home park situations

Good landlords want to provide good homes to good tenants; make it easier for landlords to be profitable, so they can do repairs and nice things rather than scramble to stay above water costs and rising costs.

■ Community Meeting, Rental Housing Provider, Vancouver



There were approximately 20 comments received at the 11 sessions that related specifically to manufactured home parks. Manufactured home park related comments were received from participants in:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| ■ Kelowna | ■ Terrace |
| ■ Maple Ridge | ■ Victoria |
| ■ Nelson | ■ Salt Spring Island |

The challenges identified by manufactured home park owners included:

1. The high cost associated with renting, which included the cost of maintaining the parks, paying renters upon eviction, tax increases tied to increasing property values.
2. The inability to properly screen mobile park renters, which referred to home assignments (upon the sale of a manufactured home) that do not allow the manufactured home park owner to properly screen who is moving into the park.
3. The lack of damage deposits to cover park damage caused by manufactured home owners.
4. Poorly maintained trailers and property that reduce the perceived visual/esthetic appeal of the park.
5. Age restrictions in 55+ parks.

The challenges identified by manufactured home owners included:

1. The high costs and significant difficulty of removing the home following an eviction - to the point that the homeowners can sometimes lose their home/investment.
2. Park rules and regulations that are overly restrictive for home owners and their guests.
3. The high costs associated with rent increases, especially after the sale of manufactured home when there is no legal limit to how much park owners can increase the pad rent for the new home owner.



4.3.2 DISCUSSION QUESTION #2: What potential solutions might address the challenges you experience with B.C. laws and processes?

Rental Housing Providers Suggested Solutions

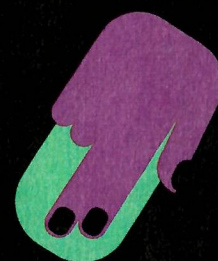
Most of the 1027 comments provided by rental housing providers regarding proposed solutions could be categorized into 16 main themes. (Table 14 shows the themed solutions and the number of comments that related to each theme).

Table 14. Themed Solutions and Number of Comments – Rental Housing Providers

Solutions – Rental Housing Providers		# of Comments
1.	Improve the Residential Tenancy Branch processes, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More effective, unbiased dispute resolution ■ Shorter wait times ■ Streamlined enforcement processes ■ Local offices and mediation services 	274
2.	Create a centralized database to screen potential renters, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To screen renters and rental housing providers ■ Electronic public registry ■ To track issues 	109
3.	Remove barriers and increase incentives to rent, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allow rental of secondary suites ■ Provide incentives to rent, like reduced tax burden 	96
4.	Streamline/improve eviction process, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Shorten the eviction process ■ More support for enforcement and covering eviction costs ■ Provide local bailiffs 	86
5.	Increase allowable damage deposits to cover costs of damage	85
6.	Bring back the vacate clause with fixed term leases	56
7.	Increase and/or improve tenancy-related education and communication generally	51
8.	Allow greater rent increases to cover increasing costs associated with high house values, maintenance, inflation and increasing taxes	43

Annual rent increase is needed – allowable yearly increase should be maintained, not going down.

■ Community Meeting, Rental Housing Provider, Salt Spring Island



Solutions – Rental Housing Providers		# of Comments
9.	Support higher standards in maintaining the condition of the home, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Giving rental housing providers more power to inspect the home ■ Enforcing renter responsibilities for damages ■ Setting mandatory high standards for home condition like building codes 	29
10.	Change the Residential Tenancy Act to reflect different rules for different situations, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Individual small rental housing providers vs. larger commercial rental housing providers ■ Short-term vs. long-term rentals ■ Market vs social housing ■ Lease holders vs sublets 	28
11.	Maintain rental housing provider discretion to allow pets	26
12.	Create insurance system to cover renter-caused damages over and above what damage deposit covers	25
13.	Ensure Government supports social and low-income housing so it isn't the responsibility of rental housing providers	19
14.	Improve clarity in the Residential Tenancy Act, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More specific rules ■ Easier language 	17
15.	Improve the tenancy agreement template	15
16.	Provide more power for rental housing providers to set the terms of agreement	10

TOP 5 SOLUTIONS most often mentioned by **RENTAL HOUSING PROVIDERS** across all 11 sessions included:

1. Improve the Residential Tenancy Branch processes
2. Create a centralized database to screen potential renters
3. Remove barriers and increase incentives to rent
4. Streamline/improve the eviction process
5. Increase allowable damage deposits to cover costs of damage

Most Mentioned Solutions by Rental Housing Providers by Location

In most locations – including Burnaby, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Nelson, Prince George, Surrey, Terrace and Victoria – rental housing providers mentioned one solution significantly more often than other solutions:

- Improve the Residential Tenancy Branch processes

For rental housing providers in Maple Ridge, Salt Spring Island and Vancouver, there was no one solution that was mentioned significantly more times than other solutions.

Renter Suggested Solutions

Most of the 1094 comments provided by renters regarding their suggested solutions could be categorized into 12 main themes. (Table 14 shows the themed solutions and how many comments relating to each theme were provided.)

Table 15. Themed Solutions and Number of Comments - Renters

Solutions – Renters		# of Comments
1.	<p>Increase the rental supply and protect the existing rental stock, includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support diverse forms of housing (co-ops, purpose-built, supportive and traditional, social) ■ Close loopholes that benefit property speculators ■ Incentivize/reward good rental housing providers ■ Recognize government role ■ Penalize unauthorized short-term rentals ■ Policies to house displaced renters 	210
2.	<p>Take steps to ensure affordability, includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Maintain or improve current rent controls ■ Tie rent increases to unit not renter ■ Ensure rent is geared to average incomes in communities ■ Provide government subsidized affordable housing ■ More purpose-built rentals 	172
3.	<p>Better enforcement of renter rights in the Residential Tenancy Act, includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Update the Act to include different forms of housing (student, supportive, social, strata, seasonal, sublets, etc.) ■ Enforce damage deposit returns and the right to peaceful enjoyment ■ Require rental housing providers to be licenced 	128

I would rather receive a rent increase whenever the landlord experiences an increase in the cost of doing business than have a Wild West situation where landlords expel tenants simply in order to raise the rent.

■ Online Forum, Renter



Solutions – Renters		# of Comments
4.	<p>Stop unfair and/or illegal evictions, includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Close loopholes and increase enforcement penalties for illegal evictions ■ Shift burden of proof onto rental housing providers ■ Increase time before order of possession takes effect ■ Implement renter relocation programs ■ Provide clear guidelines regarding renovations or repairs that don't require evictions ■ Monitor and report evictions ■ Require rental housing providers to provide a written warning to renters before issuing a One Month Notice to End Tenancy for Cause 	114
5.	<p>Improve the Residential Tenancy Branch process, includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide more RTB resources (education, arbitration, mediation) ■ Shorten wait times ■ Unbiased/equitable arbitration process ■ Stronger enforcement ■ Publish results of public hearings ■ Open more RTB local offices ■ Hold damage deposits in trust 	95
6.	Allow pets in rental units by law	71
7.	<p>Ensure rental housing is maintained to reasonable standards, includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Require third-party inspections ■ Implement maintenance standards ■ Legalize suites ■ Improve renter advocacy support 	64
8.	<p>Provide more education and information, includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Residential Tenancy Act ■ Residential Tenancy Branch services ■ Roles and responsibilities of rental housing providers and renters 	59
9.	Create a centralized database to identify bad rental housing providers and bad renters.	45

Solutions – Renters		# of Comments
10.	Support good renter-rental housing provider relationships, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Better education on rights and responsibilities ■ Mediation services 	26
13.	Improve the tenancy agreement template.	19
12.	Address problem of speculations, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Close loopholes that benefit property speculations 	19

TOP 5 SOLUTIONS most often mentioned by **RENTERS** across all 11 sessions included:

1. Increase the rental supply and protect the existing rental stock
2. Take steps to ensure affordability
3. Better enforcement of renter rights
4. Stop unfair and/or illegal evictions
5. Improve the Residential Tenancy Branch processes

The Most Mentioned Solutions by Renter by Location

In some locations – including Burnaby, Maple Ridge, Nelson and Prince George – renters mentioned the same solution significantly more often than other solutions, and that was:

- Increase the rental supply and protect the existing rental stock

For renters in Surrey, two solutions received significantly more mentions than other solutions, both receiving similar numbers of mentions:

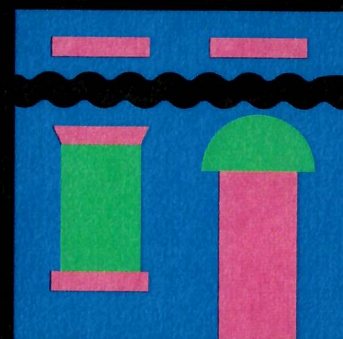
- Increase the rental supply and protect the existing rental stock
- Take steps to ensure affordability

For renters in Vancouver, two solutions received a significantly higher number of mentions than other solutions:

1. Take steps to ensure affordability
2. Stop unfair and/or illegal evictions

There are so many responsible tenants out there, but a few bad apples are ruining the batch. Small landlords need more protection against bad tenants so they feel safer about renting again.

■ Online Forum, Rental Housing Provider, Northeast



In Victoria, renters three solutions received a significantly higher number of mentions than other solutions:

1. Take steps to ensure affordability
2. Better enforcement of renter rights in the Residential Tenancy Act
3. Allow pets by law in rental units

For renters in Nanaimo there was no one solution that was mentioned significantly more times than other solutions.

Solutions Identified by Manufactured Home Park Owners and Home Owners

Solutions identified by manufactured home park owners included changes or additions to current laws and processes that would:

- Prohibit home rental pad assignments
- Stipulate renters must keep their homes and property well maintained
- Reduce age requirement at 55+ parks to 50
- Require older, ill-maintained trailers to be updated or moved

One solution identified by manufactured home owners stipulated making changes or additions to current laws and processes that would allow more time to remove a home following eviction.



Adam Olsen addresses participants at the Salt Spring Island community meeting



Spencer Chandra Herbert speaks with media prior to the Kelowna community meeting

Top Priority Solutions

Before leaving the community meetings, renters and rental housing providers were given the opportunity to identify the top three solutions they believe should be given immediate priority or consideration by the Rental Housing Task Force and the B.C. Government. To do this, all participants were given three sticky dots and encouraged to read the comments regarding solutions (presented as themes by this time) on the boards at the front of the room. They were asked to stick their dots to the three solutions most important to them. Not all attendees participated in this exercise. A total of 174 dots were placed on the boards containing solutions offered by rental housing providers. Another 140 dots were placed on the boards containing solutions offered by renters. Tables 16 and 17 show the solutions that received more than 10 dots and the number of dots each received.

Table 16. Rental Housing Providers Suggested Solutions – Top Priorities

Top Priority Solutions – Rental Housing Providers		# of Dots
1.	Improve the Residential Tenancy Branch processes	54
2.	Create a centralized database to screen renters and rental housing providers	17
3.	Remove barriers and increase incentives to rent	17
4.	Bring back the vacate clause with fixed term leases	10
5.	Streamline/improve the eviction process	10
6.	Improve clarity in the Residential Tenancy Act	10

Table 17. Renter Suggested Solutions – Top Priorities

Top Priority Solutions – Renters		# of Dots
1.	Take steps to ensure affordability	26
2.	Increase the rental supply and protect the existing rental stock	25
3.	Improve the Residential Tenancy Branch process	21
4.	Better enforcement of renter rights in the Residential Tenancy Act	20
5.	Provide more education and information	10

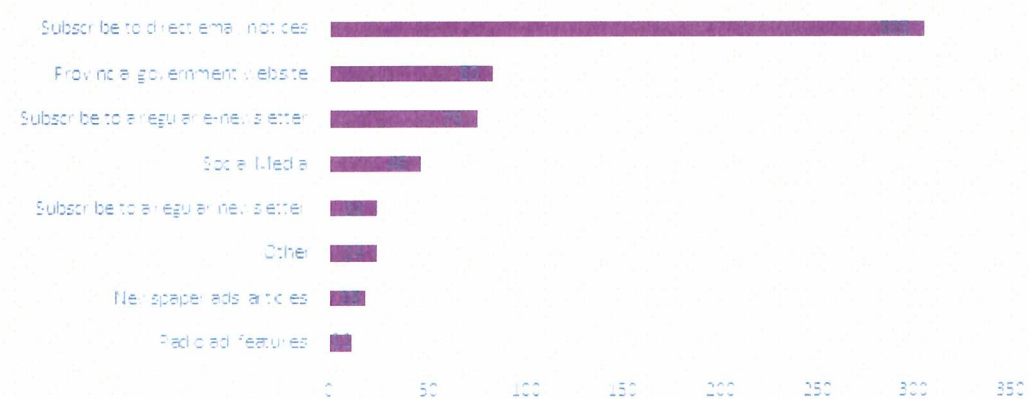
Ideally there needs to be a better solution where specific rental units are built that are lower cost to build and available for rent at a lower cost. This is something the government would have to take on.

■ Online Forum, Rental Housing Provider, Mainland/Southwest

4.3.3 What is your #1 PREFERENCE FOR RECEIVING INFORMATION about B.C. tenancy laws and processes?

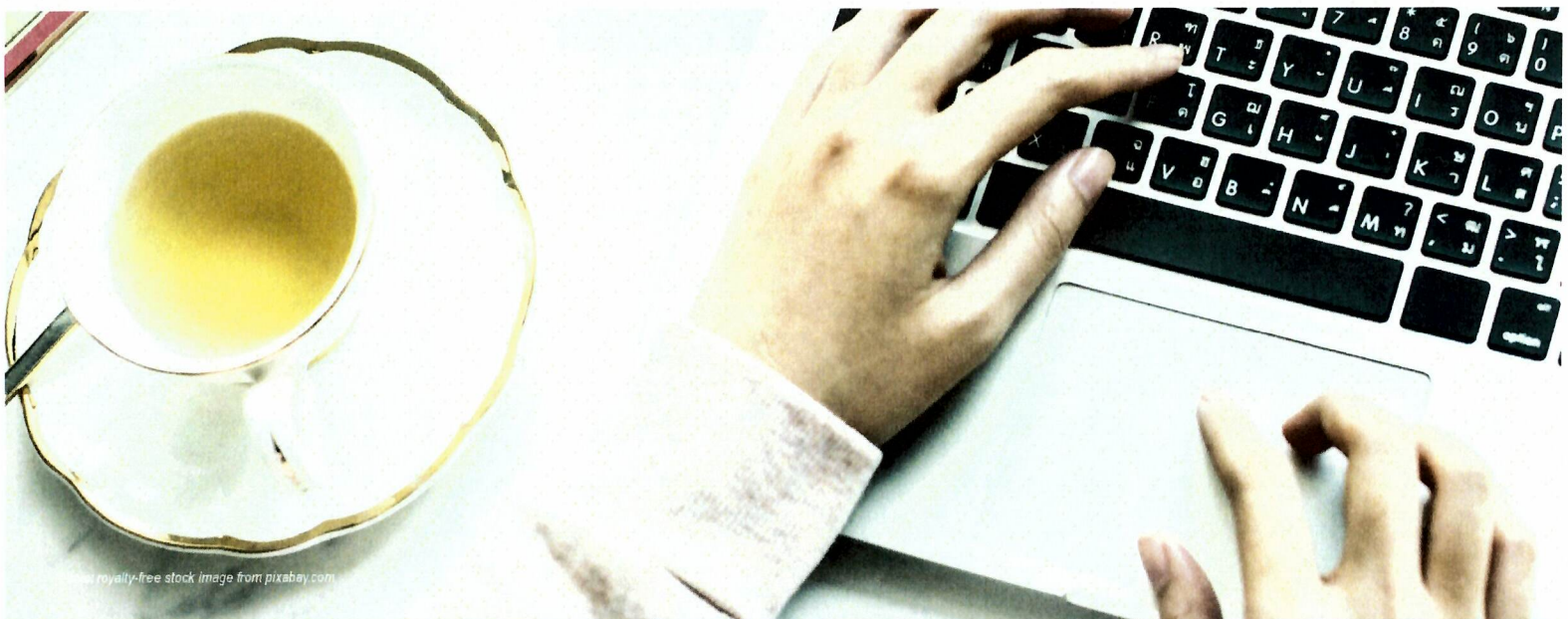
Of the 788 participants who attended the in-person community meetings, 586 chose to identify their top preferred communication channel by voting using sticky dots on a poster that identified nine options. Overall, those who participated overwhelmingly chose “Subscribe to direct email notices” as their number one preference. In fact, this choice received more than three times the number of votes that “Provincial Government website” and “Subscribe to a regular e-newsletter” received as the second and third most popular choices respectively. Receiving few votes were traditional media such as newspaper and radio. (Table 18 shows the number of votes received for each communication option for all 11 locations.)

Table 18. Communication Preferences



Communication preferences by location

While most locations selected direct email notices as their number one preference by a very significant margin, not all locations did. “Subscribe to a regular e-newsletter” was the top preference for participants in Salt Spring Island and Surrey. Maple Ridge indicated two top preferences “Subscribe to direct email notices” and the “Provincial government website.”



4.3.4 WHAT DO THESE TERMS MEAN TO YOU?

To ensure B.C. tenancy laws and processes support fair process, as well as safe, secure and affordable housing, the Task Force sought to understand what these terms mean to renters and rental housing providers. We asked the question and community meeting participants provided hundreds of comments that describe what these terms mean from their perspectives. Below is a summary of the definitions renters and rental housing providers provided most often for these terms.

What does “FAIR PROCESS” mean to you?

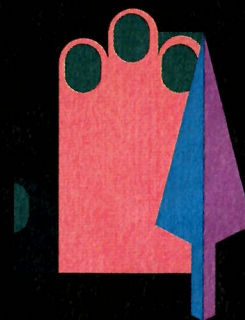
Renter	Rental Housing Provider
<p>Rental housing laws processes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Don't encourage/permit a power imbalance between renters and rental housing providers ■ Are free from discrimination (race, economic status, family status, pets, etc.) ■ Balance the rights of renters and rental housing providers ■ Stop illegal or unfair evictions ■ Ensure neutral, non-biased and evidence-based arbitration decisions ■ Are transparent, timely and clearly laid out 	<p>Rental housing laws and processes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Are equitable, balancing the rights of rental housing providers and renters ■ Demonstrate unbiased, consistent, evidence-based decisions ■ Hold all parties accountable ■ Don't leave rental housing providers to bear all costs for dispute resolution, arbitration and evictions ■ Are mutually beneficial

What does “SAFE” mean to you?

Renter	Rental Housing Provider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Home is maintained in good condition and has functioning safety features like good locks, lighting, smoke and CO₂ detectors, etc. ■ Home meets health standards, meaning free from mold, pests, etc. ■ Environment is safe, meaning free from bullying, harassment, abusive behavior, discrimination and threats ■ Peaceful enjoyment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Home is maintained in good condition and has functioning safety features like locks, lighting, smoke and CO₂ detectors, etc. ■ Safe to rent, meaning investment and property is protected ■ Environment is safe, meaning free from physical or emotional intimidation, threats. ■ Free from criminal activities

Inconsistent hearing results on very similar hearings.

■ Community Meeting, Rental Housing Provider, Victoria



What does “SECURE” mean to you?

Renter	Rental Housing Provider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Long-term tenure, meaning no threat of unfair eviction ■ Functioning security measures like locks, lighting, controlled access, etc. ■ Pet friendly - pets provide a sense of security ■ Assurance of affordability over the long-term, meaning predictable and reasonable rent increases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Long-term certainty and confidence that home and investment will be protected. ■ Rent paid on time, property is looked after and people are respectful ■ Functioning security measures like locks, lighting, controlled access, etc

What does “AFFORDABLE” mean to you?

Renter	Rental Housing Provider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Being able to pay rent and cover other basic needs – not having to make tradeoffs ■ Not paying more than 30% of income on rent ■ Housing affordable for all incomes and circumstances – seniors, low income, families, single parents, people with disabilities ■ Rental rates geared to incomes in area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Renters not paying more than 30% of their income ■ Ability to cover costs and receive a reasonable return on investment ■ Government-subsidized housing – not rental housing provider-subsidized ■ Market-based rents



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