Budget 2019

Provincial

On October 11, CHBA BC CEO Neil Moody and government relations staff member Alycia Coulter presented to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. This all-party committee accepts proposals from individuals and stakeholders for the annual budget. The CHBA BC presentation focused on market housing affordability and strategies within the provincial government control. Read the Hansard transcript from the presentation here. Read CHBA BC’s written submission here. The provincial budget is expected in February 2019.

National

CHBA National CEO Kevin Lee presented to the Standing Committee on Finance on September 1. He presented data from CHBA’s National Opinion Poll conducted in Spring 2018 to support the policy recommendations. Read the submission here. View the YouTube video here.

Legislature Day

CHBA BC is hosting its first Legislature Day this November! Approximately 30 members from across the province will be coming to Victoria for this event. It includes a full day of government relations training, a day of meetings to speak with MLAs and a reception for MLAs of all parties and their staff members. This is an exciting opportunity for CHBA BC to raise its profile at the Legislature in Victoria.

Municipal Elections

B.C. held its municipal elections on October 20. Several CHBA local associations hosted all-candidates meetings, distributed townhall questions, and participated in direct discussions with candidates. Now the hard work begins, in educating new Mayors and Councillors about the positive role CHBA and members play in their communities.

Referendum on Electoral Reform

British Columbia is having a referendum on what voting system we should use for provincial elections. The referendum is being held by mail from October 22 to November 30, 2018. If you don’t receive a package by November 2nd, contact ElectionsBC. (Page 5)

If more than half of voters support a change to proportional representation on the first question, the proportional system with the most support on the second question will be adopted. CHBA BC is non-partisan and will not endorse either system. CHBA BC only will encourage all members to participate, take the time to learn more and vote.

Speculation Tax

The speculation tax legislation was introduced on October 16, 2018 (click here to view). It is a significant step to see a development lands exemption in the legislation. This exemption was a direct ask of CHBA BC and several of the CHBA BC recommendations are included. These include projects under construction, exemptions for up to one year for vacant completed units for sale, and recognition of phased developments. CHBA BC participated in technical sessions, wrote policy submissions, and held direct meetings with Minister of Finance and staff to advocate for this exemption. We appreciate and applaud that the government has listened to our asks in this area. Please submit any member feedback on this exemption by email.

Additional amendments to the speculation tax legislation were announced on October 18 by Green Party leader Dr. Andrew Weaver. These now require that the rate for Canadians be reduced to 0.5% (to match the rate for British Columbians), meetings will take place with all municipalities affected on an annual basis, and the revenues collected must stay in the communities they were collected from to be used on social housing initiatives. Read the changes here.

We recognize there are additional member concerns with respect to out-of-province Canadians and the status of some municipalities that remain unresolved. Our strong concerns to these issues have not changed, and we will continue to provide feedback to the government in this area.

Campaign

CHBA BC produced an education campaign for consumers to provide information on the speculation tax legislation and our concerns. Some of the highlights of the September and October campaign include: media articles and op-eds, Facebook Ads that reached over 400,000 people with over 800 comments, almost 500 petition sign-ups on the stopthetax.ca website, and 500 postcards distributed at local events. To view a summary of all speculation tax efforts, click here.