



Member Newsletter | March 2017



Advocacy

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Drywall Tariff Update: A joint coalition effort with the Canadian Home Builder's Association (CHBA), UDI and other stakeholders has resulted in substantial reductions to the Drywall Tariff. [Read more.](#)

BC GOVERNMENT

Foreign Buyers' Tax: UDI has sent a thank-you [letter](#) to the BC Government for the changes to the foreign buyer's tax, exempting highly skilled workers and entrepreneurs coming to this province from paying the tax. While UDI doesn't have all the details yet, that's a step in the right direction and what we urged back when the tax was introduced.

BC Budget 2017: UDI supported the Province's Property Tax Relief for First-Time Homebuyers, additional schools funding & 5,000+ Units of Affordable Housing via [UDI media release.](#)

BC Building Act Updates: The Provincial Government has updated the list of technical building requirements that local governments will be allowed to keep in their municipal by-laws under the *Building Act*. Please see the [linked information](#) regarding the temporary exemptions and limits that will be placed on municipal by-laws as of December 15, 2017 under the *Building Act*. UDI is hosting a meeting with provincial officials and members on March 30th to learn more on the *Building Act* exemptions, the upcoming *B.C. Building Code*, fire standards, and the upcoming *Energy Step Code* that local governments will be able to adopt as of December 15, 2017.

Energy Step Code: After numerous discussions with provincial, municipal officials and stakeholders on the myriad of new and sometimes conflicting green building requirements, UDI is pleased to support the more consistent, single direction of the upcoming [Energy Step Code](#). Local governments will be able to adopt this on December 15, 2017. UDI spoke at a webinar February 28th, with 200 participants from local governments. UDI's presentation on industry views regarding step code implementation is available [here](#).

Ride-Sharing vehicles: UDI believes [the provincial government's plan](#) to permit ride-sharing by the end of Dec. 2017 will reduce the need for costly on-site, underground vehicle parking requirements in housing developments and possibly make housing more affordable.

Municipal Incentives: The BC Government has taken UDI advice and offered additional resources to municipal planning departments to speed up building approvals, which can take

up to seven years currently for multi-family dwellings.

MUNICIPAL/REGIONAL

City of Burnaby: UDI wrote a [letter](#) endorsing the *Draft Metrotown Downtown Plan*, which reflects some UDI recommendations and accommodates mixed-use, multi-family housing development around transit in this growing downtown centre.

City of Richmond: The City of Richmond, Vancouver Coastal Health- Richmond and Richmond School District 38 have partnered to update the 2010-2015 *Richmond Community Wellness Strategy*, building upon successes and lessons learned. They're inviting stakeholders, including developers who build their communities, to participate in the [online survey](#) to guide the next strategy.

Township of Langley: UDI's Langley Liaison Committee members met with township staff February 22nd and 23rd to raise several issues to work on collaboratively. UDI will write a letter to the Township on the township's new CAC program.

City of Vancouver (CoV): Through its municipal liaison committee, UDI and its members have had numerous discussions with CoV planners and policy makers on building challenges and solutions. At a March 7th City Council meeting, senior planners proposed some significant steps forward to ensure homes can be built faster with a streamlined approval process.

Highlights:

- Proposals for fixed-rate CACs, DCL review, streamlined development processes and improved service standards/metrics/tracking with on-line permitting
- More knowledge sharing amongst civic staff and the industry
- Prioritized process for affordable housing, including market rental
- Regulatory review project with stakeholders (including UDI) plus public outreach
- Creation of more district schedules to replace district policies and community plans, implement needed amendments to existing district schedules
- For more detail, the links to these proposals are:
 - <http://council.vancouver.ca/20170307/documents/rr2presentation.pdf>
 - <http://civic.neulion.com/cityofvancouver/> (livestream March 7, 2017 Council meeting)

Empty Homes Tax: UDI and the City of Vancouver met on February 24th to discuss the Empty Homes Tax and how it will impact new development. The City will provide clarity to the development industry in April on the taxation impacts. UDI is also working with the City to host a breakfast seminar on this topic in April.

Railtown Downzoning: Some UDI members have raised concerns about a potential downzoning in Railtown related to a change from M-2 to I-4 zoning. Please see report: [Zoning Changes in Railtown](#) and contact UDI with any questions or concerns.

HUB Cycling Survey: Final reminder-UDI members are encouraged to provide their opinion on cycling amenities in new construction projects in the City of Vancouver by taking this [6 minute survey before Friday, March 10, 2017](#).

City of North Vancouver: City of North Vancouver wants to meet with UDI on April 5th at 2pm, City of North Vancouver City Hall to discuss their [Density Bonus and Community](#)

[Benefits Policy](#). Please [contact UDI](#) if you are interested in attending this meeting or providing your feedback on the proposed policy.

City of New Westminster: The City of New Westminster wants to meet with UDI (at our office) on April 6th at 4pm to discuss their *Economic Development Strategy*. Please [contact UDI](#) if you are interested in participating in this review and meeting.

UDI in the News

- [Q4-2016 UDI State of the Market Report Media Coverage](#) (CKNW, Metro News, The Vancouver Sun, BIV, The Vancouver Courier, Mortgage Broker News, REW.ca, Pricetags)
- [B.C. ministers won't force municipalities to increase building around transit lines](#) – The Globe and Mail
- [Metro Vancouver missing out on millions in transit corridor taxes](#) - CBC
- [Housing Starts Best Practice](#) - CKNW
- [Don't blame developers: Letter to Editor](#) - North Shore News
- [City's 'green' bylaw will add more costs to new homes](#) - BIV
- [Micro-suites in Vancouver: Small-time living or living small?](#) – The Vancouver Sun
- [Metro ponders DCC hike for upgraded sewer system](#) – Tri City News
- [A City Block Full of Inspiration](#) – UDI regular column for Westcoast Homes and Design
- [2017 B.C. Budget: Property transfer tax cut, more foreign tax revenue](#) – Western Investor



UDI President & CEO Anne McMullin with Certificate of Appreciation from Surrey Mayor Linda Hepner for participation in the Surrey Schools Coalition of stakeholder groups.

Over the past year, the Coalition lobbied for additional school support in keeping with community growth, resulting in a \$217M provincial government investment for capital projects and 5,200 new K-12 student seats. See: [Surrey Board of Trade Newsletter](#) front page for profile, continued on page 19.

UDI Seminar: Sonja Trauss, Founder of SFBARF and YIMBY Advocate

San Francisco-based housing density advocate **Sonja Trauss** is leading the charge on building more housing options, from tall towers to condos to rentals and subsidized housing in an expensive city that has difficulty accepting change.

[Can her brand of YIMBYism \(Yes In My Back Yard\) work in Metro Vancouver to address our own affordable housing crisis?](#)

UDI is honored to host a provocative conversation with Sonja Trauss, Founder of [San Francisco Bay Area Renters' Federation \(SFBARF\)](#). See her [NY Times profile](#).



"It's very easy to get people to agree we need more building. ... But when it comes to someone actually building housing — on your block or on a block near you — people don't want it."

- Sonja Trauss

This is your opportunity to hear from Sonja:

- Successes and lessons learned in forming SFBARF

- How you collaborate with various stakeholders (YIMBY, NIMBY, government, and private sector)
- Policy and advocacy initiatives and execution

[REGISTER ONLINE](#)

External Events

March 21: [ULI speaker series for Langara Students](#)

March 30: [RED Talks: Confronting Consensus](#)

April 18: [Greater Vancouver Board of Trade Housing Summit - The Missing Middle](#)

Welcome New UDI Members

UDI recently welcomed these new members from across BC.

- Association of Chinese Canadian Architects & Engineers
- Chandos Construction
- Coast Appraisals
- Don Mann Excavating
- DR Holdings
- Exceeds Inc.
- Hemmera
- iFortune Development
- Le Fevre & Company
- LLN Properties
- NAI Commercial
- Smith + Andersen Falcon Engineering
- Suttin & Ceidar Consulting Group
- Upward Construction & Renovation
- Weber Shandwick Vancouver



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