Charting the Course *B.C. Retrofit Roadmap*

The Reframed Initiative demonstrated that whole-building retrofits of multi-unit residential buildings (MURB) are technically achievable and socially transformative. Now the priority is to convert pilot-stage learnings into scalable, province-wide practice. In response to the current challenges, the roadmap below sequences high-leverage activities across three-time horizons.

REFRAMED INITIATIVE BY PEMBINA INSTITUTE

PEMBINA Institute

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	Current challenges	NOW 0–6 months	NEXT 6–18 months	LATER 18–36+ months
Collaborative delivery and procurement	Design-bid-build and even collaborative design approaches often exclude contractor input, despite critical importance of constructability. Lack of experience in alternative methods makes teams hesitant to pursue them.	Convene a procurement working group of municipal governments and housing providers to scope guidance for delivering publicly funded retrofits.	Update procurement policy and issue provincial guidance enabling collaborative delivery models (integrated design, progressive design-build) as eligible or preferred procurement paths. Issue standardized success metrics for provincially funded retrofits.	Scale collaborative delivery and prefabrication into standard practice for MURB retrofits across B.C.
Permitting and approvals	Projects lack early, multi-party engagement among city staff, contractors, architects, and utilities. This is compounded by inconsistent municipal regulations, often due to oversight by multiple departments, and varying code interpretation.	Launch a province-led pilot permit hub with two or three willing municipalities and First Nations to centralize retrofit permitting precedents.	Scale the permit hub to additional municipalities. Issue guidance to standardize code interpretation across municipalities and require early pre-permit coordination meetings for deep retrofits.	–
Utility interconnection and grid capacity	Electrical requirements often drive oversized, unnecessary connections, and liability concerns. Outdated equipment buffers also compound at every step.	Support envelope-first design guidance.	Direct BC Hydro to right-size interconnection require-ments and reduce reliance on over-conservative equipment/amperage defaults.	Develop business cases justifying smaller amperage connections.
Distributed energy resources	Solar/storage adoption is constrained by rates, net-metering changes, building massing, and technology lock-in. Low-income tenants are structurally excluded from early-adopter incentives.	Explore how municipalities are currently permitting and approving distributed resource projects. Assess barriers and enablers to facilitate greater uptake and early collaboration with utilities.	Roll out standardized bylaw guidance for distributed resources/solar and thermal energy networks with municipalities (building on BC Hydro's bylaw guide).	Scale integration of distributed resources into standard practice for MURB retrofits across B.C.
Tenants-in-place	Design often underestimates real tenant conditions and doesn't account for vulnerable populations. Well-intended tenant protection rules also add regulatory complexity and lead to project delays.	Incorporate tenant engagement and impact assessment as an early pre-design step in publicly funded retrofit planning, drawing on CMHC design guide input from Reframed pilots.	Establish standardized guidance for navigating anti-renoviction regulations, tenant board processes, and relocation planning (incremental vs. full relocation models) for deep retrofits.	Scale integration of distributed resources into standard practice for MURB retrofits across B.C.
Funding and financing	Funding is fragmented across housing providers with no centralized source, and the business case for retrofits undervalue non-energy and societal benefits. Building owner retrofit decisions and funding/financing is based on short-term considerations.	Assess existing retrofit funding and financing programs to identify opportunities for better coordination and streamlined access.	Stand up a coordinated, single-access, long-term provincial retrofit financing mechanism that values non-energy benefits alongside finance and insurance offerings.	Explore a mechanism to tie a long-term retrofit upgrade plan to refinancing events for private rental portfolios.
Knowledge, capacity and accountability	Building variability makes standardization difficult and contractors often lack retrofit-specific experience. Lessons from retrofit projects are not systematically shared across the sector.	Publish a Reframed lessons learned report mining data from the six pilot projects.	Fund targeted training and a knowledge-sharing network to scale pilot learnings and support contractor/trades training in retrofit-specific and mechanical prefabrication skills.	Establish a permanent, funded cross-sector retrofit collaborative as Reframed's successor. Report publicly against retrofit and emissions-reduction metrics to sustain political and market accountability.