

HORNBY ISLAND HOUSING SOCIETY

Box 33
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To: **Islands Trust Council;**

Cc. Russ Hotsenpiller, Chief Administrative Officer (rhotsenpiller@islandstrust.bc.ca)

Cc. Lori Foster, Executive Coordinator (lfoster@islandstrust.bc.ca)

Cc: Islands 2050 (islands2050@islandstrust.bc.ca)

Cc: Hornby Island Local Trustees: Sue Ellen Fast, Alex Allen, and Grant Scott

August 27, 2020

Re: **Islands 2050 Consultation Process** and Trust Policy Statement Review

Statement in support of the retention and enhancement of language in the Trust Policy Statement related to social equity and affordable housing:

The importance of the Islands Trust Policy Statement for the future of Hornby Island and all of the islands in the Trust Area cannot be overstated. Since 1993, this document has guided policy development and regulations governing the use of our land, and the effect of land use policy on our people.

The guiding principles of this document must reflect all of the pressing needs of our communities now and into the future. The process to date of the Islands 2050 public consultation has produced a document (What We Heard Report) that reduces the issues of affordable housing and social equity to minor considerations. However, affordable housing has consistently been identified by Hornby Islanders as our top and most critical community problem. We can only surmise that the three questions presented in the consultation process encouraged and guided the public to focus on the environment, which we all value very highly and wish to protect, to the exclusion of other pressing subjects governed by land use bylaws.

We are facing unprecedented housing challenges on Hornby Island. Issues that were problems in 1993 are now full blown crises. Our current policies governing land use on Hornby Island appear to be inadequate to address our local need for affordable housing. Over time, our community is becoming less resilient and more fragile, more exposed to the market pressure on land prices.

The Hornby Island Housing Society has over 25 years of experience responding to the challenges of our growing housing needs. We have had the joy of creating non-market rental housing for seniors and the privilege to be working towards a new development of affordable housing for our young people, families and our workforce. However, we are also acutely aware of the unmet needs of our populations. The demand for housing often exceeds supply. This means that our friends and neighbours go without. Now is the time to do more for them, not less.

Housing is currently mentioned only twice in the Trust Policy Statement and is quoted below:

- “Local trust committees and island municipalities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, address their community’s current and projected housing requirements. “
- “The health of a community is influenced by numerous factors such as economic security, education, social support systems, the cleanliness and safety of the environment, and the availability of such necessities as educational and social services, transportation, affordable food and housing.”

The deterioration of the housing situation on Hornby Island, as well as on other islands in the Trust area, is proof that these directives do not go far enough.

We cannot easily alter the outside forces affecting the availability of safe, adequate and affordable housing on our island. We can however, institute the regulatory framework which will protect our island communities’ future. We can do this by clearly emphasizing the importance of housing affordability in the policy statement. We can do this by outlining that it should be a major policy objective of the Trust to sanction, allow, and support affordable housing initiatives.

In the Trust Council’s own work at its 2016 Housing Forum, Trust Council Members, Local Trustees, planning staff and local groups all identified problems and actions which could be taken to address these challenges. Most notably, it was recognized that the Islands Trust is in a position, and in fact has a duty, to act as facilitator in creating solutions to the chronic housing shortage on the islands.

In the proposed revisions to the Policy Statement, HHS suggests that a new section be dedicated solely to affordable housing. The following is a draft of the type of language and range of subject matter we would like to see included under “Policies for Sustainable Communities”.

Affordable Housing

Commitments of the Trust Council

- Trust Council holds that there is a housing affordability crisis in the Trust area and that there is a duty to facilitate solutions to chronic housing shortage for residents.
- Trust Council holds that the unique character of the island communities results from the existence of a diverse range of people from all different backgrounds, classes, ages and position in life being able to reside in the area and that a large barrier to the preservation of that diversity is the cost of housing.

Directive Policies

- Local Trust committees and island communities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, address the development of land use patterns which discourage housing diversification and affordability and encourage site appropriate options to rectify these.
- Local trust committees and island communities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, acknowledge that lower, middle and working class people and families are essential to our communities and have a right to live in the trust area.

- Local trust committees and island communities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, acknowledge that there is a chronic shortage of stable, healthy, affordable housing for low and moderate income families and individuals, and that this shortage threatens the sustainability of island communities.
- Local Trust committees and island communities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, acknowledge that carefully managed densification is a necessary component of any financially viable and effective housing solution, and can allow us to sustain both the social fabric of our community and the natural environment of our island.

Recommendations

- Trust Council encourages residents in the Trust area to work towards grassroots, site specific solutions to the housing affordability crisis in a way which preserves the character and environment of the Trust area.
- Trust Council encourages the Federal, Municipal and Local Governments to assist islanders and community groups in the creation of housing solutions such as non market housing, accessory dwelling units, cooperatives, co-housing and other forms of ecologically sensitive densification.

Thank you very much for your time and attention. We hope that our suggestions can be of some use as housing is such an important and critical issue on Hornby Island, as we know it is on many other islands in the Trust area.

Yours sincerely,

Sadie Chezenko

Director

Hornby Island Housing Society