

From: Laura Patrick
Sent: Saturday, January 24, 2026 9:22 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: SSIInfo; Islands2050; Minister@gov.bc.ca
Subject: Re: Housing and draft TPS

Susan,

Thank you for taking the time to write and for your thoughtful engagement with the draft Trust Policy Statement review and housing issues on Salt Spring Island. I appreciate your clear concern for both housing affordability and the protection of our island's ecological and rural character.

I have copied Islands Trust staff so that your comments may form part of the public record and inform the ongoing policy discussion at both the local and federation levels.

You raise important points about the current Official Community Plan (OCP), including its provisions for affordable housing. You also correctly note that current zoning allows for significant additional build-out within existing density limits, much of which would be realized as market housing.

Despite this theoretical capacity, the lived experience on Salt Spring Island makes clear that our existing policy framework has not resulted in sufficient housing options for families and low- to moderate-income workers. Increasingly, residents are being pushed into insecure, non-conforming, or unsuitable housing arrangements. This suggests that, while the OCP includes supportive language for affordable housing, it has treated such housing as an exception rather than as a central planning objective, while leaving ample room for continued growth in market-driven housing that does not address affordability.

The Local Trust Committee is not advancing predetermined changes to the OCP or Land Use Bylaw. Instead, we are taking a community-forward approach to gather ideas and perspectives on how these planning tools might be updated to better respond to today's realities. A key question we must collectively consider is whether maintaining the status quo—given current housing outcomes—is sufficient, or whether different policy approaches are needed to achieve more equitable and durable results while respecting ecological limits.

Your emphasis on prioritizing affordable housing delivered by government and non-profit partners, secured through legal agreements, is well taken. Efforts such as local and regional funding initiatives, non-profit leadership, and measures to better utilize existing housing stock—including recent steps related to short-term rentals—are all important pieces of a broader solution.

As we look ahead, all residents of Salt Spring Island are invited to help shape an updated planning framework—one that seeks to balance housing needs, ecological protection, respect for Indigenous rights and title, and long-term community resilience. Further public engagement opportunities are expected to begin in February.

One of the easiest ways to stay informed is to subscribe to Islands Trust updates at <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/subscribe/>. Please be sure to select the Salt Spring Local Trust Committee to receive notifications.

Thank you again for your thoughtful contribution to this important conversation.

Laura Patrick. Local Salt Spring Island Trustee

On Jan 23, 2026, at 5:49 PM, SUSAN EVANS <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Dear Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee,

The draft Trust Policy Statement review has brought needed attention to housing on Salt Spring Island, particularly the lack of decent attainable housing for families and low to moderate income workers. I'm writing to request greater clarity regarding how our current Official Community Plan (OCP) is perceived as an obstacle to the pursuit of affordable housing. Under the existing OCP, zoning increases are permitted for affordable housing projects secured by binding legal agreements. Thus this OCP emphasizes support for affordable housing. I also understand that cluster housing is already permitted under the current OCP.

Concurrently, our OCP does not support increasing existing densities for housing that is not legally controlled as affordable. (BTW, I strongly advocate for maintaining—or reducing, if future analysis recommends, —this limit to growth in any future OCP in order to protect our natural ecosystems, rural character, and food self-sufficiency potential.) Current zoning build-out projections indicate that Salt Spring Island already has the capacity to accommodate a population increase of approximately 5,000 people in additional market-built homes.

Our core challenge, therefore, appears to be expensive housing—an issue common to desirable locations worldwide. From my research, increasing the

supply of market housing does not resolve affordability challenges. I am concerned that the market-driven housing solutions currently being discussed on the island will further exacerbate the housing squeeze while placing additional strain on our ecosystems. Blanket density increases, such as those proposed in Bylaw 530, would no doubt increase land values. Even targeted density increases (for example, through Floor Area Ratio) can have this effect. More households means more impact on natural resources such as water availability, intact forests, species diversity as well as infrastructure including roads, services, septic and waste systems, schools, health care services, and ferry capacity.

Given this context, it is unclear to me which proposed changes to the Trust Policy Statement and subsequent OCPs would guarantee—or even increase the likelihood of—attainable housing outcomes through density increases and market mechanisms. I believe our focus should instead be on prioritizing and incentivizing the construction of affordable housing secured by binding legal agreements, led by government and non-profit organizations. I understand that a number of steps are in the works to support this process. e.g. Funding contributions from Hotel Tax; private donations for affordable housing projects accepted by Salt Spring Island Foundation, IWAV and other non-profits; the CRD has set up an \$85 million housing fund.

In addition to expanding the number of affordable housing units, there may be opportunities to make better use of existing housing by encouraging rental stock. For example, our local government has now opted Salt Spring Island into provincial legislation regulating short-term vacation rentals; a house-sharing housing registry has been established.

It appears that the community is very engaged in the active quest for viable housing solutions for a diverse, resilient community that do not endanger the object of the Trust. I look forward to a clearer explanation of how the proposed Trust Policy Statement changes will result in measurable, lasting affordable housing outcomes for our community.

Sincerely,

Susan Evans

[REDACTED]
SSI, B.C. V8K 2P7

cc. Rob Botterell, MLA
Christina Boyle HMA

