



About Housing

The ongoing need for a variety of affordable and attainable housing on Denman has been documented repeatedly in numerous studies. Those studies formally state what most of us know from personal experience or through witnessing others' experiences: many islanders are struggling with unaffordable, unreliable, insufficient or simply non-existent housing.

As property prices above a million dollars become the norm, it's increasingly difficult for not just low-income people but also mid-income people to buy a home on Denman. Many Denmanites are worried that our social sustainability and the diversity of our community are threatened.

People are asking how the Local Trust Committee can help. Here are some things it has done, is doing, and can do:

1. **Moratorium on bylaw enforcement against illegal housing**

There has been a partial moratorium on bylaw enforcement against illegal housing since June, 2019. This was put in place to prevent unintended displacement of vulnerable individuals and households, *not* as a tool for the creation of housing.

It says that bylaw enforcement will not proceed against unlawful dwellings unless a) there are two separate complaints about the property; b) there is more than one unlawful dwelling; c) the dwelling is larger than 90 square metres; or d) the dwelling is in a development permit area (generally, an environmentally sensitive area).

This moratorium is a temporary policy, called a standing resolution, that can be rescinded at any time by a vote of the LTC.

The standing resolution is *not* a moratorium on evictions. Eviction is a decision made by a landlord, and the Local Trust Committee has no power over that. What the standing resolution *does* mean is that no landlord will be asked by the Islands Trust to evict someone, other than when the above exceptions apply.

If you are a property owner or tenant and find this confusing or concerning, feel free to contact one of your local trustees. All calls are confidential; we don't report to bylaw enforcement or to your neighbours.

2. **Secondary dwellings**

Any property in the R2, A, F and RE zones can have a secondary suite without any additional permitting process (all development needs a Siting and Use Permit). This can be attached to the main house by a four-metre covered walkway, thus enhancing privacy.

These zones can also have a free-standing cottage of up to 1507 sq ft if granted a Temporary Use Permit (TUP). This cottage can be a tiny home or other movable dwelling.

TUPs are, indeed, temporary, and will need to be extended or renewed at three-year intervals. This makes them particularly useful for movable dwellings like tiny homes, or for flexi-use of studios.

A TUP application costs \$440 and the process is relatively simple. There is currently one TUP on Denman, which has been renewed once.

Learn more about these options in the brochure entitled *Secondary Suites/Dwellings* under the menu item "Resources" at www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/Denman.aspx

3. **Multi-unit affordable housing projects**

The Denman Official Community Plan supports rezoning for multi-unit affordable, seniors and special needs housing. Currently there is a project for affordable seniors' housing moving into the final stages of the rezoning process. Keep an eye on local media to stay informed.

4. **Amendments to housing regulations**

Although there is no magic land use regulation that will solve the housing crisis, there are various options that can likely make a difference. Denman had a community process in 2014 to review our housing regulations and policies, resulting in the opportunities for secondary suites and cottages outlined above. At the time, the LTC proposed a further review five years down the road, which would have been 2019. However, since then, local planning staff have been fully occupied processing applications (primarily two large applications for affordable housing), leaving little time to work on in-depth regulatory changes. COVID hasn't exactly helped speed things up. This situation appears to be changing, and at its January 2021 meeting the LTC added a review of housing regulations as part of a Top Priority Project. This sets a direction to work on this once a budget and staff availability allow.

5. **Information and support for individuals**

Trustees and Islands Trust staff spend a lot of time simply talking with Islanders about options for developing their land within the framework of local land use regulations. If you are interested in providing housing for a family member, friend, employee, or tenant, contact us to explore options. All contact info is on the Islands Trust website, www.islandstrust.bc.ca.