

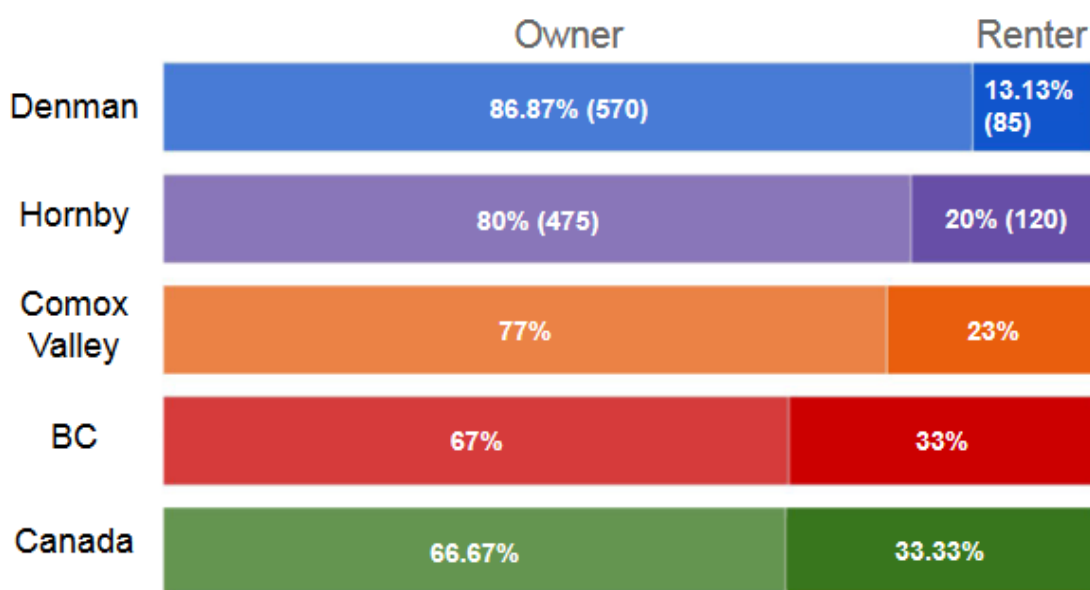


A Guide to the Denman Island Housing  
Advisory Planning Commission's Final Report

# Our housing need in numbers -what we look like

- A total of 881 houses
- 96% single detached houses
- Average household size – 2 people
- 86.87% % owner occupied 13.13% rented
- 79% occupied year-round – 21% occupied part-time
- 21.6% of population is counted as low income compared to 10% in the Comox Valley and in BC
- Median combined household income after tax was \$55,200 and the individual median after tax income was \$30,200
- Average sales price for a Denman house in 2022 was \$1,003,859

## Housing by Tenure



Source: Angeleah Hoepfner, *Denman Island 2023*

## Our housing need in numbers

- The 2008 Housing Needs on Hornby and Denman Island (Hornby Island Economic Enhancement Corporation, December 2008) identified a total housing need of 68 units for renters and seniors.
- Housing Needs Assessment of Northern Region of Islands Trust (Dillon Consulting, June 21, 2018) identified a housing need of 80 affordable housing units based on an estimate of population growth which has now been exceeded.
- The 2021 Census found 16.7 % of Denman households to be in core housing need. 16.7% of Denman Island's 881 households - is equal to 147 households in core need in 2021.
- This number will continue to increase in relation to our population growth unless we do something

*(See page 13 – 17 of the Report for a more complete data analysis)*

# The Challenges

- “Housing health means having a home to start with. Your home is clean and dry, pest and mold free, it is an appropriate size for the number of people in your family. It has access to clean potable water and light after dark. It is warm in the winter and is affordable.” Angeleah Hoepfner *Denman Island 2023*
- Gentrification has driven housing prices up and the supply down. Inadequate supply of safe stable affordable rentals
- Many houses do not have access to safe potable water and as housing costs go up – food budgets are reduced
- Site investigations for illegal housing can continue
- No public housing. Our median age is 62.8 and there is no senior’s housing
- Small community with jurisdictional overlap between the Trust and CVRD
- Changes to the “unique amenities” must be made with consideration to impacts to the “natural environment”
- Existing bylaws block individual community members from compassionately dealing with the challenges on their own

*(See page 19 – 20 of the Report to see some of the challenges our community is facing.)*

# What we were asked to do

The Denman Island Local Trust Committee established the Housing APC to:

Conduct a focused review of “Denman Island Land Use Bylaw No. 186 and Official Community Plan No. 185, focusing on housing, with the goal of increasing options for affordable and attainable housing while also minimizing the impacts of housing generally to better protect the environment while supporting equity, diversity and inclusion”

Consider “all things Housing” - including identification of options for the LUB and OCP; staff reports; previous studies; other materials about housing provided by Denman community members. This includes but is not limited to the recommendations from the Denman Island Housing Review and subsequent input.

## Our approach

- Well publicized weekly round table public meetings focused on specific topics over the summer –
  - Room at the table for all who attended
  - Specific invitations to affected groups to participate
- Document review of:
  - The Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw
  - Denman census data
  - 20 years of housing studies including the 2023 Housing Review by MABRRI
  - Islands Trust Draft Housing Options Tool kit 2023

*(See page 5 – 11 of the Report for a full description of our background and process)*

# What we want as a community

- Most people on Denman want to see adequate affordable housing options for islanders that are environmentally sustainable. Since 2002 - 10 separate public reviews and consultations have said the same thing.
- People told us:
  - “With the system set up right now, it is punishing the most vulnerable members of our community and the people who are trying to help. It's unacceptable. What we need is an overhaul of all the housing related bylaws. “July 25, 2023 LTC
  - “We need to change what we're doing on Denman. We've become a very insular, rich separated community and I feel ... through my work at the school, how things have changed, and the young people aren't being supported and it's a really difficult place to have a family. ... Right now we have the power to change that” HAPC Sept. 5, 2023
  - “In my opinion, the quickest and easiest way is to ... remove restrictions on secondary housing on whatever zoning you decide. ... And just doing that would enable landowners to do what we want to do --- to provide housing for people. ... Even if you didn't do anything else, you know it would make a huge difference.” LTC July 25, 2023
  - “Our seniors who have come here to live out their dream life and they need support. So if we do not have housing for those people who are providing that support, we do not have the infrastructure to support the elders who live with us and among us.” HAPC Aug 22, 2023

*(See page 11 – 13 and Appendix 3 Community Consultation page 65 – 108 of the Report to see some of the community input into this report.)*

# The direction we recommend

1. Create Housing options
2. Remove red tape slowing down approvals for much needed housing
3. Minimize the environmental impact of housing
4. Ensure enforcement is trauma informed and respectful
5. Create new zones to facilitate faster development of long-term affordable housing
6. Simplify and clarify the Official Community Plan and Land use Bylaw
7. Advocate to other levels of government

# Our Recommendations:

## 1. Create Housing Options

- a. Legalize all existing affordable housing
- b. Encourage landowners to convert existing buildings into affordable housing and allow new builds.

Allow a full range of housing types in all zones except for conservation, park, R4, and the water zones including:

- c. accessory dwelling units (which include tiny homes, yurts, and trailers)
- d. secondary suites
- e. room rentals and
- f. secondary dwelling units (house)
- g. Change some of the requirements for primary dwelling units. (includes combined floor area, cisterns)
- h. Allow residential options within a vital downtown
- i. Ensure affordability

*(See page 23 – 27 of the Report for a full description of these recommendations)*



## **i. Ensuring affordability**

*How to ensure affordability and availability was the single most difficult issue that faced the Commission. We agreed that we need to increase the availability of affordable housing – we were evenly split on how.*

### **The imperative of affordability**

- We are required under section 473 of the Local Government Act to have policies regarding affordable, rental and special needs housing
- Without affordability controls the rental market will follow the real estate market on Denman
- At least 16.7% of households on Denman are living in core housing need now – paying over 30% of income to shelter, home requires major repairs or is unsuitable
- Propose using density bonus zoning to enable affordable accessory dwellings
- Use CMHC defined affordability calculation that is also used and published by the province annually
- Islands Trust to advocate for Denman to be eligible for any subsidies and incentives to build affordable housing.

*(See pages 30 – 31 and Appendix 1 The Imperative of Affordability in Housing our Community (p.56 -60) of the Report for a full description)*

### **No affordability controls**

- Concern that landowners will not build or rent if affordability measures are required
- This may result in fewer houses on the market
- Need to focus on increasing supply which will produce more affordable housing in the long run
- There is no shared definition of affordability

*(See pages 33 of the Report for a full description)*

## 2. Remove red tape slowing down approvals for much needed housing

- a. Remove the temporary use permit as a condition for housing
- b. Eliminate the Density Bank
- c. Align Denman residential options on Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR) land with the maximum number of Dwellings allowed under Provincial Agricultural Land Reserve regulations
- d. Support multi-tenant affordable housing projects and advocate for streamlining their approval
- e. Investigate how pre-zoning might help to minimize the amount of time and money that are required to implement new zones and housing options.

*(See page 33 – 38 of the Report for a full description of these recommendations)*

### **3. Minimize the environmental impact of housing**

- a. Require a maximum Combined Floor Area to minimize impacts of all housing.
- b. Require rainwater catchment to preserve ground water
- c. Encourage re/use of existing buildings, and alternative forms of housing
- d. Encourage the use of natural building materials and “off-grid” systems
- e. Encourage and promote conservation-focused innovation in new affordable housing developments
- f. Preserve and enhance public walkways and cycle paths
- g. Allow as many safe and affordable ways of dealing with human waste as possible

*(See page 38 – 42 of the Report for a full description of these recommendations)*

## **4. Ensure enforcement is trauma informed and respectful of human rights while focusing on short-term vacation rentals and environmental issues**

- a. Require minimum 24 hours notice before any site visits by a Bylaw Enforcement Officer.
- b. Require all Bylaw Enforcement Officers to undergo Trauma Informed Practice training (e.g. through the Justice Institute).
- c. Investigate alternative bylaw complaint processes that are based on principles of restorative and community justice.
- d. Priorities about bylaw enforcement (content and penalties) are to be decided and changed by Denman Islanders
- e. Enforcement actions must not be taken against a person's housing - regardless of what type of housing.
- f. All bylaw complaints must originate from an island resident and must be accompanied by the complainant's full name and contact information. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted or processed
- g. Ensure bylaw enforcement officers do not have more power than police officers in attending properties.
- h. Denman LTC should form a commission to review and make recommendations about bylaw enforcement practices.

*(See page 42 – 46 of the Report for a full description of these recommendations)*

## **5. Create New Zones to facilitate faster development of long-term affordable dwelling units**

- a. 'ECO' Zone
- b. Tiny House Zone
- c. Medium Density Multi-Family Zone
- d. Home Based Assisted Living Zone

## **6. Simplify and Clarify the Official Community Plan and the Land Use Bylaw**

- a. Update and amend the Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw
- b. Increase community engagement around housing-related issues

## **7. Our Recommendations for Advocacy**

*(See page 44-55 of the Report for a full description of these recommendations)*

## Next Steps:

1. Publish the Report and share with the community
2. Community Information Meetings
  - Staff will prepare material for the community Information meeting, which we ask to be reviewed by HAPC prior to its public release)
  - Community feedback from information meetings summarized
  - Staff analysis
  - Bylaw change decisions made
2. Bylaws Drafting & Legal Review
3. Community Information Meeting/Public Hearing
4. Approvals

## **In Conclusion**

We are grateful to all of the community members who came each week to sit at our table and share their ideas, visions and fears about housing. As long and detailed as the full report is, it is for you. We hope that as you read it you find words that may have been yours, and others that shine the light forward, to bring our community safely home.

We most especially want to thank our Island Trustees (now and in the past) who gave us this opportunity to recommend changes our community so desperately needs. While the nature of invisible housing need can make it easy to ignore, our current Trustees have engaged courageously with trying to find solutions.

We believe we have some (not all) answers in this report, and we hope our Trustees are able to bring these seeds to fruition - in the form of bylaws that support health at home in our community on this precious island, during these interesting times.