



DATE OF MEETING: June 21, 2021
TO: Mayne Island Local Trust Committee
FROM: Narissa Chadwick, Island Planner
Southern Team
COPY: Robert Kojima, Regional Planning Manager
SUBJECT: Mayne Island Housing Regulations and Policy Review – Options for Discussion

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That the Mayne Island Local Trust Committee request staff to draft land use bylaw amendments supporting the distribution of a maximum square footage on lots under 2h/5 acres outside of all water service areas, and groundwater regions that are identified as critical through Groundwater Mapping.**

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the Mayne Island Housing Regulation and Policy Review (also referred to as Flexible Housing) Project. It identifies potential options related specifically to where the concept of distributed square footage could be applied and provides context and information to enable a focussed discussion on what floor area maximums could be considered.

BACKGROUND

This project was initiated in May of 2019. A first step in the process was the drafting of a Housing Regulations and Policy Review Discussion Paper. The report was presented to the LTC at their regular meeting on September 28th 2019. The report identified a number of options to increase housing flexibility in order to facilitate access to more affordable housing. The LTC indicated interest in focusing on understanding and engaging the community in discussion related to the idea of establishing a maximum floor area policy which would allow for floor area to be distributed among a number of units.

Three community information meetings were held (January 18th, March 29th, May 28th).

Reports and presentations related to this project can be found on Mayne Island's Projects Webpage: <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/mayne/projects-initiatives/housing-review/>

ANALYSIS

What is Flexible Housing?

- Housing not limited to a single focus (e.g. seniors, multi-unit)
- Housing that could address a number of needs without rezoning, government funding or substantial investment
- Housing that can facilitate individual households sharing the costs to purchase a lot while being able to live in separate dwellings
- Housing that can facilitate more rental availability
- Housing that can facilitate supportive living arrangement (e.g. senior care providers living in separate dwelling on senior's property)
- Housing that does not increase overall development footprint

LUB Limitation on Flexible Housing

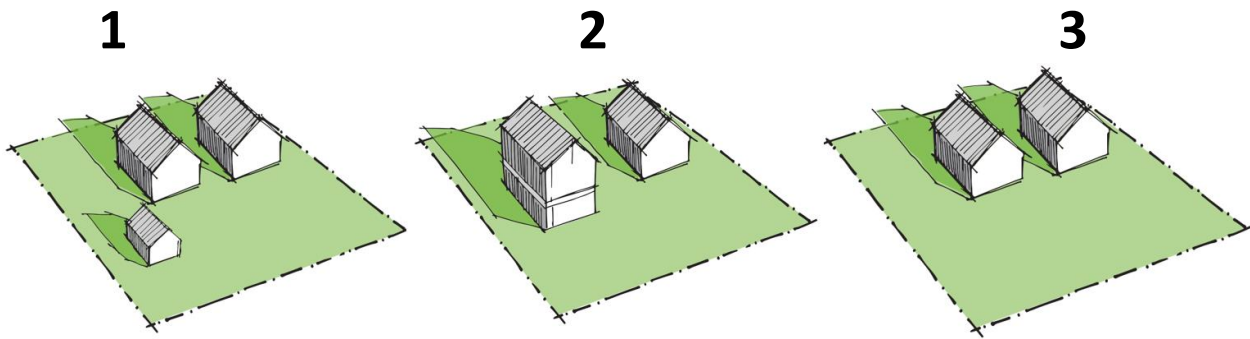
As identified in previous reports the LUB limitations on housing flexibility include:

- Lots under 0.6 ha/1.5 acres are not permitted to have a cottage.
- Restrictions on size of cottages and secondary suites.
- Only one secondary suite or one cottage, in addition to primary dwelling can be constructed on parcels less than 4 ha/1.5 acres.

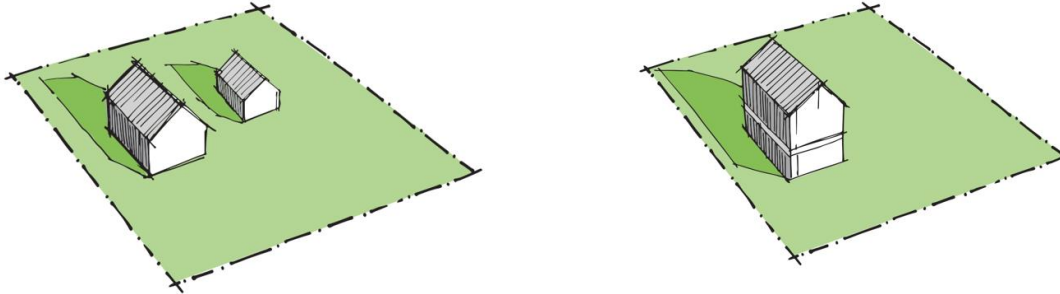
Distributed Maximum Floor Area – Flexible Housing Option

The option of distributing a maximum floor area between a number of dwellings in the Settlement Residential Zone (SR), was explored in the September 28, 2020 report as a way to address LUB limitations. The LTC suggested that the concept not be limited to the SR Zone but be considered for all residential lots under 5 acres. This option could allow for:

1. Up to 3 dwellings on residential lots >0.6ha and <4ha
2. A dwelling with a suite and an additional dwelling on all lots where secondary suites are allowed
3. Two independent dwellings on all lots <0.6ha



What is currently permitted on SR lots greater than 0.6ha and all lots in the SR zone that are not in water service areas:



How many lots could this approach apply to?

The map in Attachment 1 identifies the total number of lots larger than 2h/5 acres. It also identifies which ones are in water systems as well as ones that are vacant. Keep in mind that some lots that are not vacant and have smaller size dwellings may be able to take advantage of a distributed maximum floor area approach.

Residential Lots <2h/5 acres	1378
Residential Lots <2h/5 acres (vacant)	224
Residential Lots <2h/5 acres not in water systems	341
Residential Lots <2h/5 acres not in water systems (vacant)	50

Community Engagement

Community engagement discussions, and emails and letters received as a result of these conversations with the community identified that:

- There is strong support in the community for different approaches to increasing affordability in the community. The flexible housing approach being introduced was seen a viable option on some parts of the island particularly for young people looking for affordable options.
- Improvement districts are very concerned about increased water use and increased sewage. The Village Point Improvement District pointed out that they have seen a trend toward part-time residents spending more time on the islands as a result of Covid. This has threatened water availability.
- There is growing concern in the community related to the impacts to groundwater supply.
- There is strong interest in water catchment requirements for secondary supply to be considered as a part of a flexible housing approach.

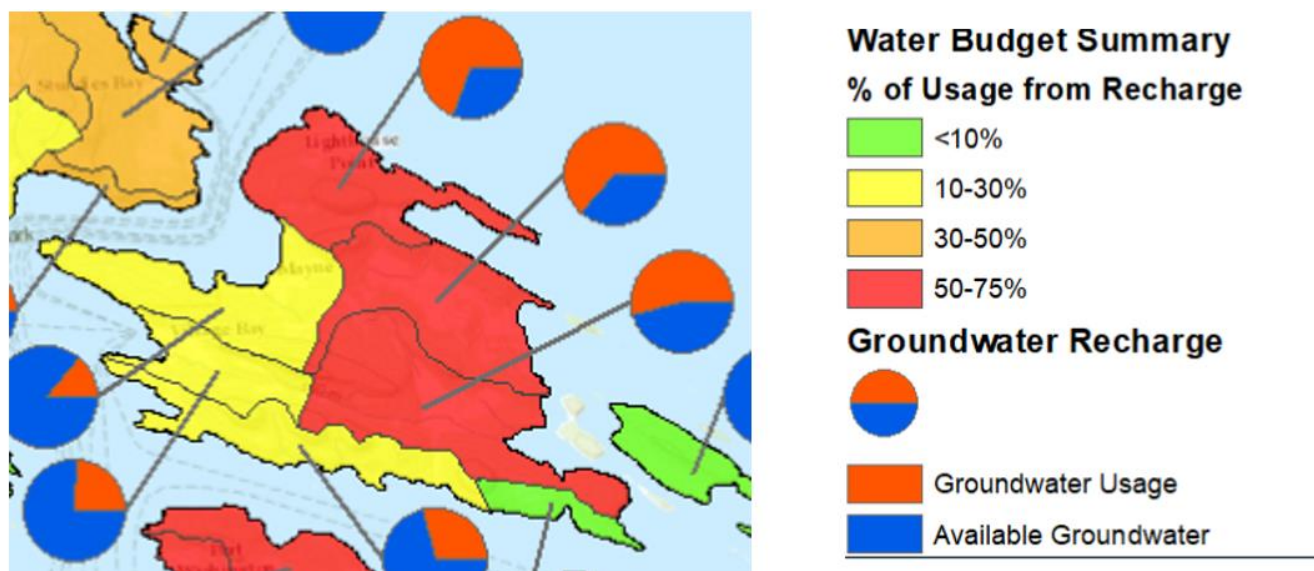
Groundwater Considerations

Given the concerns raised by the Improvement Districts related to impacts on water availability and Islands Trust Policy Statement 4.4.2 *“Local Trust Committees and Island Municipalities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, address measures that ensure neither the density nor intensity of land use is increased in areas which are known to have a problem with the quality or quantity of the supply of freshwater, water quality is*

maintained, and existing, anticipated and seasonal demands for water are considered and allowed for” staff encourage the LTC to consider recent groundwater mapping data for Mayne Island. As illustrated in Map 1 below preliminary identification of groundwater budgets (the balance between groundwater usage and groundwater recharge in groundwater regions) identifies that there is a large section of the island where groundwater sustainability may be threatened. This section of the island is identified in red on Map 1 and contains Class 1 and Class 2 areas.

Class 1- Areas that are in critical need of attention where there is high confidence in existing data.

Class 2 – Areas where there is a potential for critical attention but some data uncertainty. Data uncertainty is the result of data gaps and the need for further analysis of water use, such as agricultural water demand, and differences between estimated water use, actual use and deemed water rights. Groundwater budgets are based on a conservative assumption of average usage per lot related to land use designation.



Maximum Floor Area Considerations

The identification of the maximum floor area to be considered in a distributed square footage approach still needs to be determined by the LTC. This point was brought up at previous LTC meetings and during the community meetings but has not been discussed in detail.

Mayne Island currently does not have maximum floor areas for primary dwellings, only for cottages. The only regulation restricting floor area is lot coverage. South Pender has maximum floor area regulations in its Land Use Bylaw. Maximum floor area regulations are currently being considered for North Pender.

While the South Pender and North Pender work focuses on single dwellings and not a distributed scenario they do illustrate previous thinking on maximum floor area. As identified in Table 1 the South Pender Island maximum floor areas for their rural residential zones are supportive of main dwellings that are quite substantial in size. The North Pender LTC has been considering more restrictive floor area of dwellings. Their analysis has involved looking at building permits over the last 2 years to identify the sizes of homes that are being build. This analysis, as seen in Table 2 indicates that there is a trend toward smaller homes.

Considering that much of the discussion related to distributed maximum square footage for Mayne has emphasized the encouragement of smaller footprint living, the floor area maximum in a distributed floor area scenario should reflect this interest. The trends in housing size for North Pender suggest that 1000-2000ft² is a reasonable consideration for a dwelling. Also, to be considered is the increasing interest in tiny home living. As BC Housing indicates tiny homes in BC on average begin at about 300 square feet.

The LTC may want to consider using a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) as opposed to maximum square footage. FAR is the ratio between the number of square feet of floor space in buildings to the square footage of the lot size (see Table 3). This would allow for the maximum allowable floor area to coincide with lot size. As indicated in the recent paper on Residential Floor Area Ratio produced for the Islands Trust Regional Planning Committee, “FAR is not typically used for residential development in rural areas with disparate lot sizes. It is a tool that works best in denser areas with consistent lot sizes and configurations and with the goal of implementing density in a manner that provides both flexibility and achieves public benefit and objectives”.

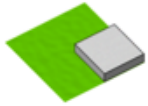
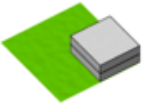
Table 1: South Pender Maximum Floor Areas

Lot Area	The total floor area of all buildings may not exceed:	The floor area of a dwelling may not exceed:
Less than 0.4 ha (1 acre)	465 m ² (5000ft ²)	353 m ² (3800ft ²)
0.4 ha to 0.79 ha (1 to 2 acres)	557 m ² (6000ft ²)	418 m ² (4500ft ²)
0.8 ha to 1.59 ha (2 to 4 acres)	743 m ² (8000ft ²)	520 m ² (5600ft ²)
1.6 ha to 3.9 ha (4 to 10 acres)	836 m ² (9000 ft ²)	543 m ² (5845ft ²)
4.0 ha (10 acres) or greater	1858 m ² (20000ft ²)	560 m ² (6030ft ²)

Table 2: North Pender New-Build Dwelling Sizes

Single Family Dwelling Unit Floor Areas 2019 & 2020	
Floor Areas	Number of BPs
0 to 500 ft ²	4
501 to 1000 ft ²	10
1001 to 1500 ft ²	3
1501 to 2000 ft ²	9
2001 to 2500 ft ²	1
2501 to 3000 ft ²	1
>3000 ft ²	1

Table 3: Floor Area Ratio

FAR \ FSI	0.25	0.5
BCR	25%	50%
25%		

Given the trend toward smaller dwellings and the interests of the LTC in supporting smaller footprint living staff recommend a maximum square footage of 2500ft² for lots <0.6ha (where maximum lot coverage permits) and a maximum of 3000ft² for lots >0.6ha be considered for a distributed density scenario. If the LTC would like to explore this further they may request staff to do an analysis of building permits on Mayne over the last two years to see if trends are similar to those on North Pender with respect to dwelling size. The LTC may also request staff to provide more details of what a floor area ratio approach would look like on the different sized lots.

Options and Rationale for Recommendation

The options below, including the recommended option, focus on areas where the flexible housing approach could be applied based on interests expressed by the LTC (to focus on lots under 5 acres), the community and the analysis presented above.

Recommended Option: Include only lots under 2h/5 acres outside all water service areas and groundwater regions that are identified to need or have the potential to need critical attention (areas in red on Map 1).

Other Options:

1. Include all residential lots under 2h/5 acres that are not within groundwater regions that are identified to need or have the potential to need critical attention (areas in red on Map 1). Note that mapping may change as further work is done.

2. Include all residential lots under 2h/ 5 acres.
3. A minimum lot size could be considered with respect to the recommended option, option 2 or 3.

Staff recommend that the LTC support Option 1 as a pilot project. These regulations could be expanded over time to other areas. Staff also recommend that all options include regulations that require outdoor rainwater catchment as a secondary source similar to those required in the Mayne Island LUB for secondary suites (minimum 13640 litres/3000 gallons before a building permit can be issued).

As identified in previous staff reports the flexible housing approach will:

- not include RVs as part of distributed square footage option
- not include tiny homes on wheels
- not allow more than one dwelling unit to be rented as a home occupation STVR

ALTERNATIVES

1. **Request staff to provide additional information.** The additional information requested needs to be specified.

That the Mayne Island Local Trust Committee request staff to provide additional information on.....

2. **Request staff to hold an additional public meeting.** The LTC may feel they need additional community discussion on details related to items such as floor area maximums and rainwater catchment.

That the Mayne Island Local Trust Committee request staff to organize a public meeting to discuss...

3. **Remove Project from Project Priority List**

The LTC may choose to remove the project from the priority list and return to it at a later date.

That the Mayne Island Local Trust Committee request staff to remove the Housing Regulations and Policy Review from the Priority Projects list.

NEXT STEPS

If the recommendation is supported:

- Staff will draft bylaws for LTC review.

Submitted By:	Narissa Chadwick (RPP), Island Planner	June 10, 2021
Concurrence:	Robert Kojima, Regional Planning Manager	June 11, 2021

ATTACHMENTS

1. Map of Water Service Areas and Lots Under 5acres
2. Project Charter

Attachment 1: Water Service Areas and Lots Under 5 acres

