



DATE OF MEETING: January 31, 2025
TO: North Pender Island Local Trust Committee
FROM: Brad Smith, Island Planner
Southern Team
COPY: Robert Kojima, Regional Planning Manager
SUBJECT: Housing Access and Affordability Project Update

PURPOSE

The purpose of this staff memo is to provide the North Pender Local Trust Committee (LTC) with an update on the Housing Access and Affordability Project.

PROJECT UPDATE

At the Nov 29, 2024 meeting, the LTC directed staff to initiate the development of a draft Housing Action Plan that considers the recommendations of the Advisory Planning Commission (APC) and results of community engagement including the housing needs survey results. Since that meeting, the following has occurred:

- Housing needs survey results have been collated and posted on the project [webpage](#).
- A second referral letter has been sent to the APC with direction provided at the November meeting.
- The APC and staff have met three times and an addendum report has been submitted by the APC in respect of the new referral (Attachment 1).
- One member of the APC has resigned and one new member has been added. Another application for membership has been received and will be considered in-camera at the January 31, 2025 meeting.

APC Referral and Addendum Report

At the November 29, 2024 meeting, the LTC directed the APC to review the 2024 Housing Needs Assessment survey results and provide input into the development of a draft Housing Action Plan. The APC has subsequently submitted an addendum report with recommendations on short and long-term actions to increase affordable housing on North Pender Island.

The prioritized list is informed by review of the Housing Needs Survey and is divided into 4 categories of potential actions; A) Bylaw and Zoning changes or additions, B) Analysis, C) Educational opportunities, and D) Advocacy. The proposed goals and actions below are reflective of many of these recommended actions.

APC Membership and Term Renewal

The current APC term ends March 1, 2025. The LTC should decide if they want the APC to continue on for another one-year term. From a staff perspective, the APC has been very effective to date and there is value in having them continue on. The LTC could consider the passing the following resolution:

That the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee requests that the Special Advisory Planning Commission on Housing be extended to a second one-year term starting on March 1, 2025.

The APC currently has five members and the LTC will consider the appointment of other new members at the January 31, 2025 meeting. Mary Beth Rondeau has resigned from the APC, and Mike Dine has been added.

Staff have requested that APC members indicate if they are interested in continuing to participate. If the LTC decides to continue with the APC beyond March 1, staff will ensure the LTC has appointed those interested prior to the current term ending.

Contents of Draft Housing Action Plan

The draft Housing Action Plan will be consistent to the Islands Trust [Housing Options Toolkit](#) template and in a format similar to the [Mayne Island Housing Action Plan](#). The plan will focus on achievable goals, objectives and actions that can be realized in fiscal 2025-26. Based on the work of the APC and the housing needs survey results, staff propose the following as key goals and actions:

Goal 1: Updating and Using Available Data to Inform Housing Projects

Proposed Actions:

- Finalize Suitable Land Analysis and make information public
- Initiate and complete island wide build-out analysis

Goal 2: Diversifying Housing Options through Zoning

Proposed Actions:

- Expand opportunities to build secondary suites and increase flexibility for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU).
- Explore opportunities for zoning changes to permit higher density Multi- Unit Development in areas with a concentration of community amenities (eg. around Driftwood Centre)
- Explore legalizing the use of RVs on appropriate properties considering set-backs, parking, access, septic, available water, visual aesthetics, and fire safety.
- Explore opportunities to permit worker accommodation (e.g at community firehalls, Driftwood Center etc.).
- Explore permitting the use of Tiny Homes as ADUs or establishing higher density tiny home zones on appropriate properties considering, set-backs, parking, access, septic, available water, visual aesthetics and fire safety.

Goal 3: Increasing Opportunities for Non-Profit Housing

Proposed Actions:

- Explore rezoning of a portion of Anglican Church lands to permit affordable housing.
- Use Suitable Land Analysis to identify other parcels that may be appropriate for higher density community housing.
- Advocacy and collaboration with other levels of government on island-based affordable housing initiatives including potential expansion of Plum Tree Court.

- Engagement with community members to increase participation in community housing initiatives and non-profit community housing organizations.

Goal 4: Education and Outreach

Proposed Actions:

- Promote and increase awareness of secondary suite incentives and programs.
- Promote and increase awareness of template house plans to reduce development costs.
- Initiate island wide mail out describing project goals and objectives and opportunities to become involved in housing initiatives (to be completed early in the next fiscal).
- Develop educational materials to inform public of changes to zoning and results of project deliverables (to be completed following the completion of bylaw amendments as the project is wrapping up).
- Review Short Term Vacation Rental guidelines and develop educational materials.
- Initiate further engagement with First Nations on housing needs and opportunities.
- Collaborate with the Capital Regional District (CRD) on harmonization of housing projects and programs.

This is only a preliminary list of goals and associated actions based on the work of the APC and the survey results. The LTC may have other ideas or priorities that could be included in the draft plan.

April 12 Community Information Meeting

The LTC has a Community Information Meeting (CIM) scheduled for Saturday April 12, 2025. With direction from the LTC, staff will plan to spend a portion of this day’s agenda presenting the draft Action Plan to the community for input prior to final endorsement by the LTC at the May meeting. This timeline is consistent with the approved project workplan.

Workplan Overview	
Deliverable/Milestone	Target Date
<i>Project Charter endorsed and project initiation</i>	Jul 2024
<i>Engagement letter to First Nations</i>	Aug 2024
<i>Conduct web-based housing needs assessment survey/</i>	Aug - Oct 2024
<i>Draft Terms of Reference for APC</i>	Sep 2024
<i>Preliminary report with analysis</i>	Nov 2024
<i>LTC review of options</i>	Nov 2024 – Jan 2025
<i>Initiate drafting of housing Action Plan</i>	Jan 2025
<i>Recommendations to LTC, LTC review, direction to prepare bylaws</i>	Feb 2025
<i>Community consultation on draft bylaws, bylaw referrals, First Nations engagement, Finalize Housing Action Plan</i>	Feb – Apr 2025
<i>Legislative process to amend LUB/OCP (timeline much shorter if not requiring OCP amendments)</i>	May – Dec 2025
<i>Implementation and communications</i>	Jan – Mar 2026

NEXT STEPS

Staff will bring a draft Action Plan to the LTC at the April 4 meeting for further input and direction on next steps.

Submitted By:	Brad Smith, PAg Island Planner	January 20, 2025
Concurrence:	Robert Kojima Regional Planning Manager	January 21, 2025

Attachment 1. APC Addendum Report, January 2025

January 17, 2025

ADDENDUM TO NORTH PENDER APC RECOMMENDATIONS

The North Pender Special APC (NP S-APC) are submitting this Addendum to its list of Recommendations regarding the Affordable Housing crisis on North Pender.

This addendum is based on our careful review of the results of the Pender Islands Housing Needs Survey that was conducted by the LTC and is influenced by the new referral from the LTC .

a) That the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee directs staff to initiate the development of a draft Housing Action Plan that considers the recommendations of the Advisory Planning Commission and results of community engagement including the housing needs survey results.

b) That the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee requests that the Special Advisory Planning Commission on Housing review the 2024 Housing Needs Assessment survey results and provide input into the development of draft Housing Action Plan.

The extensive recommendations submitted by the APC represent an ambitious list of short- and long-term actions to increase affordable housing on North Pender. Given that the new referral asks for our assistance in developing a draft Housing Action Plan we are providing a prioritized list of actions to incorporate into that plan. The prioritized list is informed by review of the Housing Needs Survey and is divided into 4 categories of potential actions; A) Bylaw and Zoning changes or additions, B) Analysis, C) Educational opportunities, and D) Advocacy.

A) Bylaw and Zoning changes or additions

1. Short Term Vacation Rentals:

NP S-APC suggested that the NP LTC not Opt into Bill 35 in 2025 since owners of non-conforming STVRs would immediately lose this source of income and the LTC would lose oversight of non-conforming rental accommodation. The results of the survey indicate that there is general support for this recommendation. However, the APC agrees that STVRs that are *not in a host's principal residence*

or within not more than one secondary suite or accessory dwelling on the same property as the principal residence, represent a potential loss of long-term rental accommodation. Therefore, the NS S-APC recommend that TUPs for such STVRs be made to lapse after their 3 year extensions and not be extended beyond that. STVR's should not be allowed for properties where the owners are not the living. TUP's should not be granted for STVRs where the owner does not live full time. We further recommend that TUPs for such units not be offered in the future.

2. Permit the use of RVs on appropriate properties considering set-backs, parking, access, septic, available water and visual aesthetics (**Suitable Land Analysis**), as well as fire safety. Although there were some comments on the survey that did not support this, the majority were in favor. (eg Comment # 21 – *“Definitely allowing people to live in mobile homes a development to accommodate this would help immensely. Low income people can't afford a house but could afford a trailer”*). Of particular concern was the fire safety issue. It was suggested that in addition to a septic connection and potable water the sanctioned units would need to be inspected by the local fire department before the owners of the property are allowed to have people reside in RVs on their property.

This is not a long-term solution to the issue given the problems of RVs in our climate but given their widespread and increasing use we think this is a priority. A corollary to this recommendation is that the LTC establish criteria for Island Health-approved Self Composting Privies.

3. Permit under-used commercial properties to be used as principal residences and rezone existing built commercial accommodation units for residential use. TUPs could be used in some situations. An example is the Fire Halls.
4. There was support in the Survey for the development of more multi-unit subsidized housing units. An expansion of Plum Tree Court and rezoning of the Anglican Church property from Community Service (CSa) to Rental Housing (RH) are two such initiatives. The NP S-APC recommends that the LTC continue to dialogue with the North Pender Island Housing Society, the Anglican Church and other community groups to explore potential parcels of land suitable for multi-unit below-market subsidized housing (rental or ownership). This is an

issue where the APC could play an active role by arranging interaction between the Trust and Community Groups.

5. The NP S-APC recommends that the LTC explore changes in zoning and bylaws to allow increased density on suitable lots situated relatively close to the Driftwood Centre by increasing the permitted number of dwelling units on appropriate parcels of land. **"Appropriate"** to be defined by the aforementioned **Suitable Land Analysis**. This would lead to less pressure to build out to maximum possible density in other more sensitive parts of the island. Concentration of density in specific areas close to amenities would also reduce the need for transportation which forms the biggest single contributor to the Island's greenhouse gas emissions.

Specifically, the NP S-APC recommends that the NP LTC institute a **Flexible Housing Option** on North Pender similar to the one introduced on Mayne Island.

B) Analyses

1. **Suitable Land and Build-Out Analysis:** The NP S-APC believes that these analyses are very important tools in the development of a Housing Action Plan. They will inform the LTC whether and where to make zoning and/or bylaw changes to facilitate affordable housing options. We understand that the **Suitable Land Analysis** has been recently completed and ask that it be made available for review as soon as possible. The process of developing a **Build-Out Analysis** should be fast-tracked.

C) Educational material and events

1. **Secondary Suites:** There was support for the encouragement of secondary suites. (Comment # 89, *"Secondary suites Grants and tax incentives for landlords creating permanent rental accommodation"*)
This is another opportunity for the Trust and APC to inform people about existing incentives for the construction of secondary suites and ADUs from

both the CRD and the Province. A combination of these programs would provide an \$80,000 forgivable loan for such construction.

2. **Template House plans:** One interesting comment in the survey was the suggestion that the government could develop. Comment #27 *“one or two simple floor plans that pass the building code available for low income people to use”*.

This is what the Federal Government did between 1950 and 70 when there was a national housing crisis and many thousands of home were built using those plans. In fact the Federal and Provincial Governments are presently instituting a similar program (See: <https://housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/housing-logement/design-catalogue-conception/index-eng.html>) which should be available in early 2025.

The City of Vancouver has developed a catalogue of standardized house plans.

See: [/https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/construction-industry/building-codes-and-standards/guides/bc_std_des_catalogue_v1.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/construction-industry/building-codes-and-standards/guides/bc_std_des_catalogue_v1.pdf)

While this issue is outside the mandate of the Local Trust it represents an opportunity for the Trust to make this program known to residents of Pender who want to build. The development and approval of house plans is often an expensive and time-consuming part of the process and this program may stimulate new lower-cost home construction.

D) Advocacy

1. **Tiny Homes:** There were many comments in the survey in support of allowing Tiny Homes on Pender Island. (Comments # 7,8,11,12, 14,17, 43, 44, 47. 53, 76 etc). This is in keeping with the NP S-APC’s recommendation that the NP LTC permit the use of Tiny Homes on Wheels as ADUs on appropriate properties considering, set-backs, parking, access, septic, available water and visual aesthetics (**Suitable Land Analysis**). This recommendation leads to potential conflict with the Capital Regional

District since they regulate the building code. However, an initiative on this issue is being undertaken by the Trust's Regional Planning Committee [RPC] with an active project to regularize Tiny Homes on Wheels (THOW). They have already developed a THOW Guide and are working in conjunction with the Nanaimo Regional District to convene a steering committee and technical panel to explore enablement of Tiny Homes in the Islands Trust Area. The NP S-APC recommends that the NP LTC work with the Regional Planning Committee to advocate for, and implement its recommendations.

The APC could play an active role on this issue by maintaining contact with the Regional Planning group and bringing updates to the LTC.

- 2. Stimulation of Community Groups:** APC research has shown that other Gulf Islands are being more proactive in addressing the housing crisis than North Pender. On Galiano, there is one organization developing affordable housing options and another developing more options for market-rate rental housing.

Galiano Affordable Living Initiative (<https://gali.ca/>) which has acquired land and has developed a housing agreement with the Galiano Trust. They plan to develop multiple subsidized housing units.

Galiano Cottage Coop(<https://www.galianocottages.org/>) which is developing novel strategies for creating secure, long-term, market-price rental housing (*“creating secure, long-term, market-price rental housing on Galiano, managed and maintained by the islanders living in it”.*.)

The APC and LTC could work to stimulate such groups on North Pender. One idea was to have a symposium on Pender and invite the proponents of such initiatives on other islands to present.