

POLICY

Affordable Housing Policy

BACKGROUND

The need for affordable housing on Bowen Island has been studied and documented in the Affordable Housing Needs Assessment, conducted by Margaret Eberle (Eberle Planning and Research) and presented to Council in May, 2007. This was followed by the completion of a Bowen Island Affordable Housing Strategy that contained a number of recommendations, which was presented to Council in September, 2007.

Among these was a recommendation that BIM Council “act immediately and take steps to leverage affordable housing through the development and rezoning process by BIM working with developers”. This policy responds specifically to the recommendation.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The intent of this policy is:

- a) To guide Council and staff in their deliberations with development proponents on the delivery of affordable housing units as part of any new development or redevelopment.
- b) To provide clear objectives and targets for the consistent delivery of affordable housing in conjunction with all development.
- c) To create a level playing field so that all development contributes to affordable housing solutions on Bowen Island in a meaningful, beneficial and equitable way.
- d) To create a mix of affordable rental and affordable ownership housing on Bowen Island.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to any new development (residential, commercial or industrial) granted through a rezoning application or other development approvals, such as subdivisions.

DEFINITIONS

Affordable Housing – Non-market residential dwelling units that may only be owned or rented under the terms of housing covenants registered on title in favour of the Bowen Island Municipality.

Market Housing – Residential dwellings that are sold on Bowen Island without restriction as to occupancy, rental rate or price.

Compact Housing – Market Housing or Affordable Housing that is efficiently designed in studio to three bedroom units ranging in size from 40 sq.m. to 130 sq.m.

Development – Any activity that subdivides or increases the permitted density on a parcel of land. Development includes the creation of residential dwelling units, commercial space or tourist accommodation, and industrial units.

Social Housing – Provides housing to individuals that by and large are recipients of government income support programs. Government generally delegates the management of Social housing to a non-profit organization. Social housing may or may not offer supportive services.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTRIBUTION

In the interest of creating a diverse inventory of affordable housing, including social housing, on Bowen Island to meet the needs of long term residents, young families, seniors, those with special needs and those employed on the Island, all new development will be encouraged to create:

- a) A mix of housing types and sizes in each new development
- b) Housing that is within walking distance of amenities, transit and services
- c) Housing that is compact, accessible and meets the Green Building Standards set out by the Bowen Island Municipality
- d) Fifteen percent (15%) of the Gross Floor Area (GFA) as Affordable Housing (as defined by the Affordable Housing Working Group, or the Bowen Island Housing Corporation). For example, a project with a GFA of 500 sq.m. will include 75 sq.m. of affordable housing units. These units are intended to be cost neutral to the developer.

An occupancy permit for any phase of market housing in a development will not be issued until the corresponding affordable housing has been granted occupancy.

Affordable housing units should be integrated, wherever possible, with market residential units.

The majority of affordable housing units should be located within walking distance to Snug Cove. Other locations should be close to transit.

Consideration should be given to relaxing parking requirements and encouraging a car co-op arrangement in all affordable housing projects.

Rental units and ownership units are needed in a variety of sizes from Studio to Three Bedroom. Apartment and Townhouse units are needed most, but there should be some semi-detached and single detached units. Proponents should be encouraged to provide a mix of these units in each development.