

## OCP? LUB? What's Allowed on Denman Properties, and Why

I get quite a few calls from people wanting to know what they are allowed to do, and not allowed to do, on their own properties. People also want to know what their neighbours are allowed to do, and sometimes what is allowed all over our island.

I offer here a brief guide to help people figure this out. Once you do your research, it is still a good idea to call a Trustee and/or a planner to provide confirmation and clarity.

**Denman's land use regulations are captured in two documents: The Official Community Plan (OCP) and the Land Use Bylaw (LUB).** Both these documents are the distillation of *lots* of community discussion, as well as input from neighbouring communities and other agencies, and represent the closest we can come to a community consensus on how we want to live on our island. They are intended to provide a blueprint for living in harmony with our natural environment, with each other, with the larger world around us, and with the mandate of the Islands Trust, a special purpose local and regional government tasked with "preserving and protecting" this special place.

These two documents are quite different.

**The Land Use Bylaw has the actual regulations.** It's all about zoning and specifics. So this is where you should look to find out what you can and can't do. You might in particular want to look at the zoning tables (starting on page 21) which summarize what you can and can't do in each zone. Also, the definitions section, starting on page 1, is important.

The LUB is a technical document that takes a bit of work to consult. We do our best to write in plain English but the document concentrates a lot of detail and has to hold up in court, all of which gives rise to a certain amount of dryness and complexity. I recommend giving yourself a bit of time to get oriented with it.

**The Official Community Plan sets out the overall vision and principles** that give rise to the Land Use Bylaw. It is an aspirational document that includes a vision statement and guiding principles. It also has information about the island's ecosystems, culture and history. The OCP is not a set of regulations, but rather core principles. It's the "mama" document: all the regulations in the LUB have to be grounded its content.

I am continually surprised at how readable and engaging the Official Community Plan is. I return to it again and again to be reminded of what Denman Islanders believe in and want for the place we live. A Trustee from Bowen Island once remarked to me that "the O in OCP should stand for 'Our.' It's *Our* Community Plan." I take this to heart.

As well, there are maps which are attached to the OCP and LUB as appendices (known as "schedules"). The LUB maps show property zoning. The OCP maps show property designation (a

more general category than a zone, setting out the overall intent for the property rather than the specifics that appear in zoning), as well as sensitive areas, development permit areas, beach accesses and our parks and greenways plan. (Note that there is also great mapping available on the Islands Trust website – just click on the MapIt icon.)

**Both the LUB and the OCP are living documents that can be changed.** The LUB can be changed via a rezoning proposal or a Local Trust Committee-led process to review and update specific sections. The OCP can also be changed in this way but generally requires a more thorough process. Every ten or 15 years the LUB and/or OCP are opened up for a targeted or a full-scale review. The last full-scale review on Denman took place between 1997 – 2001 and involved four years (!) of community discussion, technical work and legislative process. There was a targeted review (smaller in scale) in 2005 – 2008.

Between the OCP and the LUB, you can find out just what is permitted and what's not, and also the rationale and aspiration behind the regulations. Both documents are available in the Denman Library, as well as on-line at <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/denman/bylaws/>.

**More information:**

[Www.islandstrust.ca/](http://www.islandstrust.ca/)

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