



News Release

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Housing Needs Assessments Completed for Islands Trust Area: an important resource to support the creation of affordable housing

VICTORIA – The Islands Trust Council has announced that [housing needs assessments](#) are now complete for the entire Islands Trust Area.

The Islands Trust has completed housing needs assessments for the northern islands including Denman, Gabriola, Gambier, Hornby, Lasqueti, and Thetis islands while the Capital Regional District has supported the completion of a similar assessment for the southern Islands including Galiano, Mayne, North Pender, South Pender, and Saturna Islands. Salt Spring Island has a housing needs assessment from 2015 and Bowen Island has a housing needs assessment that was updated in 2009.

The assessments evaluate the demographics, incomes, and housing stock in a community, allowing agencies with an interest in housing to quantify both housing need and the amount of housing stock available. The provincial government has recently recognized the importance of this form of data collection and now requires local governments to conduct housing needs assessments every five years. With many communities in the Islands Trust Area experiencing a critical shortage in affordable accommodation, they come at a crucial time.

“The new housing needs assessments starkly illustrate the difficult housing situations that many people living in the Trust Area are currently experiencing,” said Peter Luckham, Islands Trust Council Chair. “Far too many of our island neighbours have a lack of housing security, with many forced to vacate during the summer season. Others live in substandard housing with serious potential health and safety risks. Others pay unsustainable amounts – beyond the recommended maximum of 30% of their income – to have a roof over their head.”

By quantifying housing need, housing needs assessments help governments plan and develop appropriately-scaled housing strategies. The assessments also offer the baseline evidence that affordable housing providers require when making their case for support to funders.

As land use authorities, local trust committees and Bowen Island Municipality control the rate and scale of development in the Trust Area. They do this through density and zoning decisions that balance the need for housing while respecting the limits of the natural environment. Housing needs assessments allow local trust committees and Bowen Island Municipality to make informed decisions on the amount and nature of affordable housing their community requires.

The Islands Trust is a federation of special-purpose local government bodies representing 26,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area and another 10,000 non-resident property-owners. The Islands Trust is responsible for preserving and protecting the unique environment and amenities of the Islands Trust Area through planning and regulating land use, development management, education, co-operation with other agencies, and land conservation. The area covers the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It includes 13 major islands and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5200 square kilometres.

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*Preserving **island** communities, culture and environment*

Bowen, Denman, Gabriola, Galiano, Gambier, Hornby, Lasqueti, Mayne, N. Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna, S. Pender, Thetis
