

COMMUNITY UPDATE: GAME OVER. OR WAKE UP CALL?

Starting in September 2024 with our Public Open Houses, Bowen Island Properties has spent the past 2 years working alongside BIM staff, consulting planners, technical experts, and Island residents to envision a compact, walkable neighbourhood hub on ~15 acres of serviced land at Seymour Bay.

As directed by Council in May 2026, our rezoning application is currently paused while the Municipality completes its Official Community Plan (OCP) update and we respect this procedural deference. Unfortunately, we see the introduction of (draft) policy 2.2.4 – as presented to Council on September 21 – as clearly representing a foundational roadblock that effectively kills our project.

Perhaps more concerning – and based on our decades of experience in building community on Bowen (Village Square, Artisan Square, IPS, Cates Hill Chapel, The Children’s Centre, Tir-na-nOg, Rivendell Retreat, Cates Hill Village, Seymour Landing and the Bowen Golf Course)– we believe the same policy will **render infeasible the vast majority of Bowen’s ambition towards housing diversity, affordability and more complete community.**

WERE YOUR VOICES HEARD?

The 2nd round of engagement for the OCP yielded the following recommended revision to Draft OCP Policy 2.2.4:

“New applications for development on lots exceeding 0.4 ha in area (i.e. 1 acre) shall follow principles of Conservation Development, where a target of 50 percent of the total land subject to the rezoning application is protected from further development.”

This is the recommended revision found in the “Phase 2, What We Heard Report: Official Community Plan Update”.

This revision is deeply concerning as it does not seem to address the many concerns raised by the public as part of the Round Two public engagement.

A FIRST GOODBYE TO SEYMOUR LANDING

Without clear exemptions or flexibility written into Policy 2.2.4 for large and comprehensive pre-planned sites like Seymour Landing, this blanket approach upends decades of local investment, collaboration, and iterative design work.

In simple terms, beyond what’s already allowed under current zoning, nothing “pencils.” If this holds, we see the end to our vision for Seymour Landing, specifically:

- **Goodbye to Seniors’ Independent Living, Workforce & Rental Housing:** Purpose-built, compact housing for seniors, local workers and young families will become exceedingly unaffordable, despite available capacity to develop and service them.
- **Goodbye to Neighbourhood Gathering Spaces and Services:** Local retail and coffee shops will lack the critical ‘body heat’ to make even the most modest business case viable. In addition, the much needed electrical upgrades to existing facilities, such as Bowen Golf Clubhouse & Shed Eatery, will be very difficult, if not impossible to fund.
- **Goodbye to Public Realm and Transportation Improvements:** investments in the long-term passenger ferry landing, transportation hub and associated public space improvements are unwarranted in the context of a low-density residential enclave. And any hope of TransLink service and a permanent helicopter evacuation pad being fully expanded into South Bowen.

A BRIDGE TOO FAR IN (DRAFT) OCP POLICY

Draft Policy 2.2.4 mandates a 50% dedication of land for conservation on any rezoning application larger than 1 acre.

While we fully support the principle of conserving nature on Bowen, applying this ‘principle’ as a literal rule – irrespective of environmental, social or financial context – is deeply misaligned with our Island-wide priorities as referenced **in the balance of the draft OCP and public comments**... and blind to the challenges we face as a community.



BROADLY SPEAKING, MAJOR CONSEQUENCES

In comprehensively master-planned areas like Seymour Landing, extensive environmental protection covenants, parks, and public trail networks have already been dedicated across the broader landholding. Blind application of this policy – requiring an additional 50% dedication on the remaining, small and already-serviced footprint, (i.e. “infill development”) – begs “why?” What about the opportunity for more efficient use of our scarce, serviced development lands to deliver on diverse housing forms and island-scale commercial uses?

More concerning are the consequences that extend far beyond Seymour Landing, **this policy effectively doubles the underlying cost of land**, already the most significant hurdle to the delivery of more diverse and affordable housing and island-scale commercial uses on Bowen.

This reality applies equally to the Municipality’s own Community Lands near Snug Cove, creating an **unintended but very real barrier to the viability of future municipal affordable housing projects.**



Policy 2.2.4 – if enacted as currently written – will stifle diversity of housing and, more broadly speaking, impact the island-wide economy placing current taxpayers & businesses in a more expensive future. We see this as an “unforced error,” a step in the wrong direction and a clear market signal that will surely dissuade future investment and ambition for enlightened projects to meet our collective desires.

LOOKING AHEAD

While our formal application is paused pending adoption of the OCP update, Bowen Island Properties remains deeply committed to Seymour Landing, believing that our proposal demonstrates a tangible and much-needed offering: a model for how shared community goals can be practically implemented, offering a better outcome than the status quo alternative, which is 9 large single-family lots.

And despite our demonstrated commitment as a second-generation community builder on Bowen, we might be left to very seriously consider an “exit strategy”: where we can no longer seek to engage in bigger and more visionary conversations about complete community and future needs. We may be left to focus on development that asks nothing further of our imagination and resources, simply the mundane task of carving up one last handful of outdated estate lots.

Our vision for Seymour Landing hangs in this balance, it’s future subject to a necessary policy course correction and ongoing community support.

As Bowen Island prepares for the upcoming municipal election, key choices around housing diversity, fiscal sustainability, environmental protection and island character are top of mind for everyone.

Whatever the outcome, we look forward to engaging constructively with newly elected leadership and the community as the OCP process concludes.

Respectfully submitted,

Daron Jennings & Scarlett Duntz

Bowen Island Properties LP

Daron: 604-861-7317 | djennings@bowenislandproperties.ca

Scarlett: 604-780-5080 | sduntz@bowenislandproperties.ca

