

Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee's Proposed Cottages Bylaw 512

If adopted by Salt Spring's Local Trust Committee (LTC), the proposed *Affordable Rental Housing Cottages* Bylaw 512 would allow full-time occupancy of up to 405 units of rental housing on lots where **seasonal-only** cottages are currently permitted. These full-time rental cottages would be allowed:

- A floor area up to 56 square meters on lots between 1.2 hectares and 2 hectares, and
- A floor area up to 90 square meters on lots 2 hectares or greater.

Currently, our Official Community Plan (OCP) provides for an estimated 8,150 dwellings when all permitted buildings have been built. This bylaw increases the permitted dwellings by less than 5%. The actual number of new rental cottages that would be created would depend upon the wishes of individual property owners. **Some properties already have cottages, and the bylaw would permit them to be legally rented on a full-time basis. On properties without cottages, an owner could choose to do nothing, build a cottage, or allow a full-time renter to provide a dwelling.**

Proposed Bylaw 512 includes a covenant that would prevent subdivision of these full-time rental cottages from the parent parcel. It also requires these full-time cottages to be used for rental only. (Cottages already being used lawfully as temporary accommodations - or having been issued a building or development permit to allow such use prior to the adoption of Bylaw 512 - would be exempt from this requirement.)

Timeline: Before bylaws are adopted, provincial law requires consultation, formal notifications, a public hearing, and four readings. The LTC gave Bylaw 512 its First Reading on September 27, 2018. After initial input from a number of local agencies and the public, the LTC made some amendments to the bylaw and gave it Second Reading on February 26, 2019. Public notice must still be published in local media as well as convening a formal Public Hearing (not yet scheduled).

After the Public Hearing, the LTC will decide what happens next – it could give the bylaw its Third Reading as is, it could make minor amendments, or it could withdraw it. If it makes significant amendments to the bylaw, a new Public Hearing must be held. Once a bylaw has had a Third Reading, it is submitted to the Islands Trust Executive Committee for approval. Once that approval is received, the LTC would decide whether or not to give the bylaw a Fourth (final) Reading to adopt it and make it law.

Some Reasons Folks Like Bylaw 512:

- Legalization of secondary accommodations has been identified as a key mechanism the LTC has to address the challenge of insufficient affordable/available rental housing.
- Bylaw 512 offers the possibility of an increase in affordable, legal rental housing soon after its passage.
- Bylaw 512 offers one important component of a broad, multi-faceted approach to addressing Salt Spring's affordable/available housing challenges.

- Bylaw 512 is consistent with the Salt Spring OCP by only allowing these cottages in areas that:
 - a) are not in watersheds for drinking water or well capture zones,
 - b) are not in sensitive ecosystems,
 - c) are not in areas that are hazardous for development (e.g. unstable slopes,) and
 - d) are not in automobile-dependent areas.
- As a result of feedback from referral agencies, a number of properties have not been included in Bylaw 512. Specifically, it would:
 - a) include all qualified properties within 1 km from public transit and exclude all properties significantly more than 1 km from public transit.
 - b) exclude all properties serviced by CRD water districts (as requested by those districts),
 - c) exclude all properties in a buffer area around the Cedar Lane Water System to protect limited groundwater (as requested by that district), and
 - d) exclude farmland in the Agricultural Land Reserve, to be addressed in a subsequent bylaw once new regulations from the Agricultural Land Commission have been clarified.

Some Reasons Folks Do Not Like Bylaw 512:

- The limited scope of Bylaw 512 is insufficient to adequately address the need for affordable/available housing on Salt Spring.
- The bylaw is complex and would be simpler if it just converted all seasonal cottages to full-time occupancy.
- There is no evidence that this bylaw will produce a significant increase in the number of affordable housing units. Previously-approved Bylaw 461 that allowed secondary suites on approximately 1,500 properties may not have resulted in a significant increase in the availability of affordable rental housing.
- Property owners should have been more involved earlier in the process. No determination has been made whether the identified property owners actually have a cottage currently on them, or are even interested in renting their cottage for full-time occupancy.
- By potentially increasing density, this bylaw could endanger the availability of groundwater before we have accurate data about the extent of our groundwater supply.
- If additional cottages are built, they may be illegally used for short term vacation rental rather than affordable housing.
- Bylaw 512 may not be consistent with the OCP, especially in regard to Salt Spring's rural and agricultural sustainability (A.4.2.2,) limits to growth (A.4.3.3,) and groundwater supply protection (C.3.3.1.1)
- Although First Nations have not offered an opinion on Bylaw 512, they have usually opposed additional development on Salt Spring Island in the past.

(For more detailed information, see the full Bylaw, staff reports and correspondence to date:

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/islands/local-trust-areas/salt-spring/projects-initiatives/affordable-rental-housing-cottages/more-information/>