When the Salt Spring Community Alliance polled islanders to identify issues requiring strong community input, affordable housing was one of the top choices. As a result, the focus of the next Community Alliance discussion, co-hosted with the Housing Council and Salt Spring Solutions, will be creative solutions to the challenge of affordable housing on Salt Spring.

We hope this summary of some affordable housing options identified by local experts inspires you to come April 29 to share your thoughts and ideas on this important topic.

What can we as a community do to help move current projects to completion?

What can we do to create additional environmentally-sustainable affordable housing?

The Good News

Planning for 6 affordable housing projects is already underway: Croftonbrook, Dragonfly, Community Services' SSI Commons, Drake Road CRD project, MeadowLane Senior's Housing, and Norton Road. Land has already been secured for all of these projects.

These projects could create over 250 affordable housing units, addressing a wide range of needs. Protected by housing agreements, they will add to a permanent stock of affordable housing protected from market pressure to escalate in value. They are likely to also free up private rental housing for other renters.

Only **SSI Commons** has resolved their servicing issues. The other 5 projects are all affected by the North Salt Spring Waterworks District's moratorium on new water connections, forcing them to develop alternative water supplies, including drilled wells and rainwater catchment, in order to move forward.

Water challenges have spurred an impressive array of environmentally responsible measures. **Croftonbrook,** designed to provide 54 additional rental units (for individuals, couples, seniors, those currently experiencing homelessness, and small families who have low to moderate incomes) is leading the way by obtaining Island Health and CRD permission to use rain catchment for irrigation and grey water for toilet flushing. **MeadowLane,** the proposed facility for 36 senior residences, plans to be a leader in environmental innovations through rainwater collection from its 35,000 square foot roof, on-site water storage vaults, a potable water treatment plant on site, and its own on-site sewage treatment plant.

In addition to these affordable housing projects, a bylaw that was discussed at the March 29, 2019 Community Alliance meeting is under development to allow full-time rental of _some_ current and future cottages in specific zones. (Cottages Bylaw 512)

Some Creative Solutions for sustainable housing solutions that minimize impact on the environment.

- Adopt strategies from the report *Affordable Housing in the Trust Area: Strategic Actions for islands Trust* into the local Land Use Bylaw #355 and the Official Community Plan (OCP). (http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/media/347400/a1_2019-01-24_affordablehousingstrategicactions_final.pdf).

Below are a few examples of how this could be done:
   a) **Eco-Village Zoning**: Use total floor area as a density metric by allowing homes to accommodate **multiple dwelling unit**s within a set square metre limit. This could be done in exchange for amenities such as placing a large portion of the property under covenant (80-90%), an affordable housing agreement (resale 20% below market value), ecological building/permaculture land management plan, sustainable water supply, and/or safe waste management. This would create a legal pathway for clusters of small, low-impact homes.
   b) **Conservation Density Bonus:** Create a viable system where bonus densities can be granted to a property owner in exchange for **conservation of ecologically sensitive areas,** such as mature forests. Offering a financial incentive for conservation, it would allow more density in identified areas than can be obtained through traditional subdivision. In addition to conserving ecologically sensitive land, these new bonus densities would be kept **affordable** by **housing agreements.**
   c) **Accessory Buildings:** Revise Islands Trust Land Use Bylaws, OCP, CRD, and Island Heath regulations to allow spaces in existing buildings, such as suites above garages, shops, and commercial spaces, to be rented for full-time occupancy.
   d) Create a **singular, island-wide water district** to own, plan and manage all water resources on Salt Spring Island. Activities could include creation of a fact-based, island-wide water plan that prioritizes water resources for sustainable, affordable housing (including traditional and alternative sources) and watershed protection.

- Call for a **revision of the North Salt Spring Waterworks District Moratorium on new water hook-ups**, and revise Trust Land Use Bylaws, OCP, CRD, and Island Health regulations to clearly allow alternative water sources for all secondary and multi-family dwellings.

- Support the Community Alliance's Governance Working Group recommendation for an **Interagency Working Group** (including all governmental agencies and Improvement Districts) tasked with working together to advocate for affordable/available housing projects. Perhaps identify funding for a paid coordinator. How would we do this?

- Create a **landlord-tenant matching** process to encourage property owners to rent their available spaces. Who would be the best agency to take responsibility for this initiative?

- Lobby the Islands Trust to allow all cottages to be rented year-round, and **end illegal, non-resident investor-owned Short Term Vacation Rentals**. Provide clear and inclusive rules for legal B&B businesses and vacation rentals.

- **Dedicate a senior Islands Trust planner** with more discretionary power to prioritize affordable housing applications and bylaws. Can a CRD staff person be dedicated to affordable housing? How could we make this happen?