

SUMMER WORKER ACCOMMODATION

DISCUSSION PAPER

This paper has been prepared to encourage discussion about a possible facility to accommodate displaced residents and seasonal employees.

Issue

There is limited year-round rental accommodation
Accommodation is very scarce in the summer
There is a high demand for workers in the summer
Population aging is reducing the local labour pool
Housing challenges have caused members of the workforce to leave the Island
Remaining members of the work force continue to be displaced in the summer
Seasonal workers are required to meet local employment needs
Summer workers are being housed in illegal and/or inadequate accommodation
Lack of available workers is impacting businesses and the local economy

What

Options:	Campsite	- tent platforms or shelters with wash-house and cooking facilities;
	Trailer park	- trailers or campers plus wash-house facility;
	Hostel	- a building that can be used for other purposes in other seasons

Discussion: A campsite could be readily established. Trailers/campers would improve accommodation but could be subject to mold. A hostel would be costly to build but could achieve greater revenue, including by being used year-round to accommodate, say, mountain bikers, workshop participants, etc. The facility could start as a campsite / trailer park with a hostel being a longer-term objective.

Where

Options:	Private land	- operated by owner or leased by another entity*
	Crown land	- a) on an existing Crown lease
		- b) on unused Crown land**

Discussion: It may be hard to find suitable private land and a willing owner in an appropriate location. An Official Community Plan amendment would be required and the land would have to be rezoned. It could be subject to NIMBY concerns. The OCP already enables such a facility in the Public Use area and zoning amendments are under way. A facility could be sited on land already leased by a community organization if this is compatible with the purposes of the Society and the terms of the lease. Otherwise a lease (or free Crown grant) would need to be applied for. Possible sites may be: between the clinic and New Horizons (HIRRA-leased land), the “light industrial” lot near the Recycling Depot or the “Lions” lot near French Road. Water supply and sewerage could be challenges.

Who

Options:	Existing organization	- which has appropriate purposes and capacity?
	New organization	- new society or ad hoc group?
	Consortium of businesses	- does interest and capacity exist?

Entrepreneur	- is this a business opportunity?
Partnership	- of interested parties

Discussion: A partnership could involve a non-profit organization (eg HICEEC), local businesses and an entrepreneur. The non-profit could provide facilitation and possible access to land and funding; businesses could assist in preparing a business plan; an entrepreneur could be involved in developing and operating the facility.

How

First steps?

- bring interested parties together
- research similar facilities elsewhere
- review Housing Needs Assessment (to be completed in fall)
- prepare an outline proposal for the Community Round Table on Housing
- present a proposal for community feedback
- develop a business plan
- identify land options

When

Hold a meeting of interested parties in early September?

Alternatives

Options:	Status quo	- Individuals finding ad hoc solutions
	On-site worker housing	- Allow businesses capacity for staff housing
	Secondary units	- Allow secondary units on some or all properties
	Others?	

Discussion: The status quo has got us to the present unsatisfactory situation. On site worker housing will only benefit those businesses that have the necessary physical capacity. Allowing secondary units may not lead to take-up with respect to providing summer worker accommodation.

Notes: ** The Advisory Committee on Housing recommended using a Temporary Use Permit for such a facility on private land. Islands Trust staff has advised that such a permit cannot be used for housing.*

*** BC Housing is willing to consider a Free Crown Grant for housing on Hornby based upon Housing Needs Assessment, appropriate zoning, a business plan and lack of community opposition.*