

**Mayne Island Housing Society  
Salish Grove Affordable Housing Development  
FAQ Update, June 2021**

The Mayne Island Housing Society (MIHS) has proposed a ten-unit affordable housing development on land donated for this purpose at 375 Village Bay Rd. **The public has a chance to ask questions following a presentation during a webinar information session at 2pm on Sunday, June 6.** The Zoom code will be on our website home page, and on Facebook the week before: [www.mayneislandhousingsociety.com](http://www.mayneislandhousingsociety.com)

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: Mayne Island Housing Society, June 2021**

Q1: What has happened so far, and what's the current status of the project?

A: We looked at more than nine parcels of land before the current one was donated to us. Since then, the Society has completed four ecological assessments, including a plan for cedar wetland restoration and septic feasibility. We drilled a fabulously producing well, and developed a site plan that follows the recommendations of the ecologist. The Society is working with the Islands Trust planner to develop a housing agreement and covenants, both of which will reserve the land for affordable housing and protect the restored area forever. Rezoning and subdivision can take over a year. The Local Trust Committee (LTC) has agreed to place first reading of the draft Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaws on the June 2021 meeting agenda. The draft bylaws describe the new zoning for the affordable housing development. There will be three readings of the new bylaws, and there will be opportunities for the community to provide views before the process is completed.

Q2: How will tenants be selected?

A: This housing is for Mayne Island residents. Seven of the ten units are designated for affordable housing where tenants pay 30% of their monthly income as rent. Applicants for these units will put their names on the MIHS waiting list and apply through the BC Housing Registry, which determines eligibility via income, assets and references. The rest will apply directly to the MIHS waiting list, where similar criteria determine eligibility. Based on this selection criteria, MIHS will choose qualified tenants from the BC Housing Registry for placement in units which suit their family's household needs, when there is an appropriate vacancy.

Q3: How is the project being funded?

A: Roughly a third of the building costs will be provided by provincial/federal government grants (the Community Housing Fund through BC Housing, and the Co-Investment Fund through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation). 20% or more will be provided by the Society through predevelopment grants, community fundraising and contributions including land.—The balance will be covered by a 35 to 50-year take-out mortgage, guaranteed by BCH and/or CMHC and provided with interest rates at 1-1.5% below market rates.

Additional grants from a variety of governmental and non-governmental sources will also provide funding. Community donations are particularly important to assist with predevelopment costs prior to the larger grants kicking in.

Operational expenses including mortgage payments will be covered by rental income. BC Housing offers an operational subsidy to ensure affordable rents on 70% of the units. We anticipate that when the Society's mortgage is paid off, the rental subsidies will be provided by the operational income itself.

Q4: Who will live in these units?

A: Individuals who already live on Mayne Island: a variety of age groups and incomes. These well-built units will house a mix of those who earn low to moderate incomes and are able to live independently, and those whose incomes allow them to pay rents at the lower end of the market rate. There is no demand on Mayne for shelters for the homeless and this development will not provide supported living services to residents.

The residents will be people who already work in our shops and trades, as well as seniors who have contributed to this community for decades, families with children, singles and couples both working and retired, and folks with disabilities who are able to live independently.

Q5: What are the rents going to be?

A: BC Housing prescribes and approves all rental charges for programs such as this, a mixed rental model. The mixed rental model describes the mix of unit rents: 20% of the units rented at deep subsidy rates, 50% rent at geared to income rates, and 30% rent at affordable market rates. The final rates are approved by BC Housing.

Two units will be for residents on a fixed income (such as old-age pension, medical disability or income assistance), with monthly rents typically running at \$375 (one bedroom, one person), \$570 (two bedrooms) or \$630 (three bedrooms), and adjusted periodically.

Five of the units will be available for low- to moderate-income residents whose income is below the Household Income Limit for that size of family/unit. The rental charge will be no more than 30% of their household income.

Three affordable market units will house eligible tenants charged at the low market rental rates approved by BC Housing.

The MIHS and MI Local Islands Trust Committee will enter into a housing agreement guaranteeing that this is an affordable housing project, and that rents will be affordable in perpetuity.

Q6: What are the pros and cons of MIHS accepting public money?

A: Public funding in the form of grants and lower interest rates makes it far less expensive to build the rental housing, which allows for lower rents. There is no need to provide a profit as MIHS is a charitable non-profit organization, again reducing the building costs, and is an advantage which dovetails nicely with the free, donated land.

The downside: Qualifying for funding is competitive. Funders set requirements that involve quality of build, materials used, room sizes, unit sizes and rental prices. Funders hold the Society to a high level of accountability and oversight in the building specifications, procurement processes, operations management, financial accounting, and regular reporting.

The requirements provide accountability, security, and affordability, and sturdy quality of construction. The oversight ensures homes will last at least 60 years.

Q7: Aren't there alternatives like tiny homes or secondary suites?

A: While these can ease the need for rental housing overall, they are not guaranteed to be affordable to individuals from low- to middle-income households due to the cost of building. Further, without a government incentive and housing agreement, there's no predicting they will remain rental housing, let alone affordable rental housing.

Q8: How long will it take before Islanders see actual construction?

A: Roughly two years after subdivision and BC Housing funding approvals. If we use modular housing, on-site construction could be completed within a season.

Q9: Might this project cost Islanders money?

A: BC Housing has a rigorous approvals process and ensures projects will be successful. If the Society is unable to continue operating the project, BC Housing will find another non-profit to step in and continue operations.

The Local Trust Committee and Islands Trust itself are not signatories with BC Housing, and therefore not liable. With increases in housing funding coming from senior levels of government and a waiting list for renters, there has never been a better time to proceed.

Q10: Can the Society sell this property for profit and move onto another development?

A: No. MIHS's housing agreement with Islands Trust ensures that this development remains affordable housing in perpetuity. And the Society enters into a 60-year operating agreement with BC Housing to ensure that this development is run as affordable rental housing. MIHS, a registered charity, will be the owner in perpetuity.

Q11: Why ten units and not some other size project? Can't it be smaller or done in stages?

A: Economies of scale are needed for utilities and on-going management. Staging will cost more in the end, and does not fit with available funding models.

Q12: Why should residents not in need of housing stay informed, and how can they help?

A: A sustainable community requires a range of income levels and demographics. Stay kind, patient and informed; volunteer and donate. If you support the project, let your voice be heard.

Q13: When the church diocese donated land beside the church on Georgina Point Rd., the effort to build community housing failed. How is this project different?

A: That land was and is owned by the diocese, whose mandate does not include building affordable housing. It was rezoned and subdivided for seniors' housing and a workshop/common building by a non-profit society whose model of housing involved owner-occupied units funded by the seniors who were going to purchase these homes and live there. (There were no government grants available to reduce the costs of building.) There was insufficient interest from the community to proceed.

MIHS, in contrast, is a charitable society whose singular purpose is *to relieve poverty by providing affordable housing for low- or modest-income residents of Mayne Island*. The MIHS project will be government-funded and subsidized, and is intended for singles, couples and families, including seniors and people with disabilities who can live independently. There is much funding at the provincial and federal levels of government for this type of housing. And the need on the island is great, as has been demonstrated through research. The cost of purchasing homes is increasingly out of reach of many residents in our community.

Other questions answered previously, and still on our website, [www.mayneislandhousingsociety.com](http://www.mayneislandhousingsociety.com). (See "Frequently Asked Questions.")

Q: Where is the donated land on which the housing may be built?

Q: How far is the planned housing from its nearest neighbours, and from Village Bay Road?

Q: Is it true that if MIHS accepts funding from BC Housing, it will be obligated to take renter applications from off Mayne Island, causing an influx of outsiders looking for low rent?

Q: Who will the residents be, and is MI Housing Society subsidizing them?

Q: Who will be in charge of this land and its buildings, ongoing?

Q: What about water and sewage?

Q: How ecologically sensitive will this project be?

Q: What will access look like?

Q: What about all the noise this is sure to bring?

Q: What about garbage and unsightly materials?

Q: Will renters be allowed to sub-rent?

Q: Who will have control over bad neighbours, noise and other issues?

Contact us: [mihousingsociety@gmail.com](mailto:mihousingsociety@gmail.com)

Board of Directors, Mayne Island Housing Society