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SSI bylaw to support secondary suites, protect water

On July 5, the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee gave first reading to proposed Bylaw 461, a bylaw that could permit secondary suites as a pilot project in some parts of Salt Spring Island.

'Proposed Bylaw 461 identifies regions of the island along transit routes that are not water sensitive as ideal locations to pilot a secondary suites bylaw. It provides a balance between the need for more rental housing and the need to protect water-vulnerable areas of Salt Spring Island,' said Trustee George Grams, a member of the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee (LTC). 'It is the first phase of a longer term plan to legalize secondary suites elsewhere on Salt Spring. We are looking for community input into the proposed bylaw over the summer, before considering what improvements might be made in the fall.'

The proposed bylaw was developed to implement affordable housing policies in the 2008 Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan (OCP), which resulted from extensive public input over a 10-year period. The OCP provides direction about how secondary suites can be permitted while protecting water

supplies. The SSILTC and staff have been consulting with the community and working towards regulations that permit secondary suites since late 2010. If adopted, proposed Bylaw 461 would allow secondary suites on 1,598 new properties.

'We have benefitted from much community input into this topic,' said Trustee Peter Grove, the other local trustee on the LTC. 'Legalizing secondary suites was identified as a need by the Salt Spring Island Housing Needs Assessment (2010) and the Community Affordable Housing Strategy (2011). Secondary suites will increase the stock of rental housing and enable home owners to benefit from mortgage helpers.'

The proposed Salt Spring Island Secondary Suites Bylaw 461, including a map that shows where secondary suites could be permitted, can be viewed on the Islands Trust website at www.islandstrust.bc.ca/ltc/ss/lubproject2010suites.cfm.

There will be opportunities for input into the proposed bylaw advertised in the near future. Community members are encouraged to stay tuned and to give feedback at any time by contacting planning staff or members of the SSILTC. ✍