



Making a difference...together

Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area  
Service Delivery  
625 Fisgard Street  
Victoria, BC, V8W 2S6

T: 250.360-3275  
F: 250.360-3232  
www.crd.bc.ca

October 25, 2023

File: 0220-20

Mike Harcourt  
Pender Island, British Columbia  
Via email: [mharcourt@shaw.ca](mailto:mharcourt@shaw.ca)

Dear Mr. Harcourt:

**RE: HOUSING NEEDS IN ELECTORAL AREAS**

The Capital Regional District (CRD) Board appreciates your tireless work to advance creative, innovative, and collaborative ways to introduce affordable rental supply for those in need. In August of this year, the Board supported a resolution to work collaboratively with you to advocate to other orders of government and their agencies for housing opportunities in the Electoral Areas.

We appreciate the offer to support the CRD in your conversations at the Provincial level. Despite our best collective efforts, our Electoral Areas have been unable to leverage adequate provincial resources to support the supply of desperately needed affordable rental housing. The Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area has seen 30% population growth since 2016. With a single-family residential settlement pattern, it's housing stock is woefully ill prepared for this growth. The lack of housing options has created a desperate situation for young families, singles, seniors, workers, and volunteers.

There is an urgent need to include CRD's Electoral Areas in the *BC Homes for People Plan*. Secondary suites and accessory dwelling units represent a significant opportunity for rural areas to increase the number of rental units within the rural settlement pattern, especially in the Electoral Areas of the CRD that are also within the Islands Trust Area. At minimum, the Province of BC should include Electoral Areas as eligible communities under the BC Secondary Suite Incentive program (\$40k forgivable loan for secondary suites and garden suites).

While we applaud the BC Government and the *Housing Supply Act*, it is directed at municipalities. Islands Trust and Electoral Areas are excluded from the legislation. The need for rural scale solutions have not been considered.

There are other important ways the Province can address housing solutions in rural areas. The CRD is developing a Rural Housing Program, as proposed in the Southern Gulf Islands Housing Strategy, which was a considerable effort undertaken by the CRD in 2022. This strategy acknowledges that solutions to the housing crisis in Electoral Areas need to be tailored to the rural context where alternative dwellings and transitional solutions should be considered, and where government owned water, sewer, and other services cannot be assumed. The strategy envisions a whole of government approach where we work across multiple jurisdictions as well as with the non-profit sector to deliver critical housing in the Southern Gulf Islands. As we continue to develop a CRD Rural Housing Program, we look forward to partnering with the Province to seize opportunities that further advance housing solutions for the rural Electoral Areas.

Mr. Harcourt, we appreciate your willingness to advocate for rural housing solutions. We support you in encouraging the Province to be forward-thinking, strategic, and ready to work across disciplines to accomplish housing goals. Promoting a tangible and much needed action, such as Electoral Area inclusion in the Secondary Suites Incentive Program, is a strategic first step.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Brent", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Paul Brent  
Director, Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area

cc: CRD Board  
Ted Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer, CRD