



THE BOWENIAN

The Bowen Island Eco-Alliance is a non-profit organisation dedicated to community service and preservation of Bowen Island's natural environment.

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A Forward-looking Vision for Bowen Island

For over two generations, the Bowen Island Eco-Alliance has been active in the belief that the quality of our community life is in direct proportion to living in harmony with our island environment. We urge voters in Bowen Island's upcoming elections for local government to choose candidates who will uphold this principle.

Our vision of harmony includes measures to address climate change and local housing affordability. We value the contribution of a healthy island-scale economy to meet local needs and to welcome visitors. We differ, however, from those who advocate greater development than that already planned for in the Official Community Plan (OCP). Our community cannot simply build its way out of the challenges that we face. In fact, so often, private development creates a need for more public infrastructure that soon requires tax revenue from more development to pay for the costs. We prefer small-scale solutions that respect the island's finite size and inherent limits to growth.

The policies of the OCP are closely integrated around an anticipated level of future residential growth that forms part of the overall community plan. This level of future residential density envisioned in the OCP is referred to as the "build-out". Bowen's latest OCP, approved in 2011, commits to retaining the same level of residential build-out as the previous OCP (1996). Adhering to the build-out allows reliable planning for infrastructure and amenities needed for the future as the population grows.

One of the most innovative features of Bowen's current OCP is to encourage development in the existing village of Snug Cove and the future village of Seymour Bay by transferring residential density from less developed areas of the island into those two compact areas. This policy is intended to preserve

large un-fragmented forest areas in the rural parts of the island, while also creating "walkable villages" that contribute to affordable housing and reduced greenhouse gases. The OCP outlines a process of "density re-allocation" by which these objectives can be achieved without adding to the already anticipated build-out.

More than anything, Bowen Island needs an elected mayor and councilors who are knowledgeable and committed to maintaining the OCP policies on growth management and implementing other innovative initiatives, such as density re-allocation.

The Eco-Alliance believes that Bowen's rural character encourages a sense of mutual assistance and local initiative in the community as a whole. Rural character extends as well to an island-scale economy of locally owned and operated shops and home-based businesses; of local food production; and, in a contemporary sense, internet entrepreneurs living in "electronic cottages" while conducting commerce globally. Our community's rural character also inspires the development of arts and culture. It is not a coincidence that Bowen Island has one of the highest concentrations of employed artists and craftspeople for its size in Canada. Nor is it surprising that Bowen Island's involvement with the Islands Trust for over 40 years has fostered an environmental land ethic that forms an important part of our political culture.

These essential values form the heart of our island community. But they need to be nourished and strengthened. And they are put at risk by those forms of inappropriate development that encourage increasing suburbanization and weaken our sense of local identity.

We urge you to vote for candidates who have an environmentally-focused vision for Bowen Island's future.



Secrecy and Broken Promises

Three years ago, in Bowen Island's last local election, six councillors and the mayor were elected in a popular backlash against the prospect of a national park on part of the island, and against a set of proposed environmental bylaws that were perceived to be excessive. For the first time in memory, Bowen's local government became dominated by land developers and their supporters.

The new Council made it clear there would be no reconciliation with the large number of the electorate who disagreed with their agenda. The Council's goal was to free the economy from environmental constraints. There was no overture for a reasonable compromise; the environmental bylaws were rescinded and never replaced. The consequences of that election have been clear for all to see. Bowen Island has arguably the lowest environmental standards in Metro Vancouver. With no

bylaw to regulate hazardous slopes, municipal taxpayers risk liability for dangerous mudslides. And with no bylaw to protect the ecological integrity of large forested acreages, land owners are free to clear-cut huge areas and sell the logs.

Having campaigned on a commitment to transparency and openness, the Council held only one Public Open House, didn't like what they heard, and never held another one. Closed meetings, allowed by provincial law only under strict conditions, became the norm. By one account, the number of closed meetings is up 65% over that of the previous Council. In the case of the rezoning of Lot 2 of the community-owned lands adjacent to the school, every meeting of the Temporary Advisory Board (TAB), appointed to create a land use plan for the site, was held behind closed doors. Tim Rhodes, whose campaign literature is promising "openness and

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transparency", must explain his pivotal role as a member of TAB in those closed door meetings that created the current Lot 2 land use plan.

The promise to revitalize Snug Cove, starting with ferry marshalling, failed to build on the solid work of earlier public consultations and soon ended in chaos. Despite a large and vocal outcry by residents over mega-docks at Cape Roger Curtis, only a bylaw to limit the length of docks was approved. And despite promises, Council shelved the key-component, to preserve specific beaches as dock-free due to their special qualities, and to protect the shoreline and ecologically sensitive areas, such as eel grass beds. The monstrously large docks that mar the coastline at Cape Roger Curtis are now this Council's legacy. Meanwhile, applications for more docks at Cape Roger Curtis are pending.

The numerous shortcomings of the Lot 2 community-owned land rezoning are a direct result of the secrecy and lack of public consultation in the development proposal. The various buildings planned for the six-acre parcel contain a variety of residential dwellings. However, none of the added housing is achieved by density re-allocation from elsewhere on the island, nor are any of the dwelling units designated to be non-market housing.

Furthermore, now that the Public Hearing on the bylaws is over, and provincial law prohibits any of the current councilors from hearing or speaking about the Lot 2 rezoning until fourth and final reading of the bylaws, we are faced with the situation where at the height of an election campaign none of the four remaining councilors (Morse, Stone, Lucas, Rhodes) can explain the inadequacies of the bylaws in question. Indeed, only two of them (Morse, Rhodes) are even seeking re-election.

Clearly, what is left of the Municipal Council no longer has the legitimacy to make a final decision on the community lands rezoning. The issue must be entrusted to a newly elected Council with a fresh mandate and the existing councilors should refrain from giving fourth and final approval of the bylaws at their next regular meeting, scheduled for November 10th.

The real intent of this Council's planning processes becomes clear in the pile of Official Community Plan (OCP) amendments that have been proposed by the Council-appointed Economic Development Committee (EDC). One recommended OCP rewording would scrap the limit on the type of tourist accommodations that are permitted. The current OCP permits "bed and breakfast, guesthouse, small inn, lodge, commercial cottage and hostel". The amendment would delete these descriptions and allow "any facility where a visitor provides remuneration for overnight accommodation", thus for the first time permitting large hotels on the island.

Wolfgang Duntz, who recently resigned from Council to return to his land development business, now wants his former colleagues on Council to give first reading to his proposed real estate project called Parkview Slope. The plan applies for a mix of market and non-market multi-family dwellings at a density approximately four times greater than that envisioned in the OCP, on land that is outside of the Snug Cove Village boundary.

Every one of these development proposals share one thing in common: they exhibit a tendency to put development before planning, or to deviate from or obscure the rules that exist to regulate land use. The "just-get-it-done" impulse overpowers due process and careful consideration. Now, as this Council limps to the end of its term, many of these proposed developments are tied up in reviews because they failed to adequately adhere to OCP policies or land use regulations. This too is a legacy of this Council.



Membership

Become involved with Bowen's oldest community group dedicated to the preservation and protection of Bowen's unique natural and social setting. Membership benefits include informative speakers, opportunities to meet and network with like-minded Bowen Islanders, and a chance to become informed of and active in Bowen's evolving community.

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Address:

Membership Fee: Single \$10
Family \$15

Please attach your cheque and return to:

Bowen Island Eco-Alliance,
c/o Silberman, 1600 Tunstall Blvd.
Bowen Island, BC V0N 1G2

1. Are you a new member of the Eco-Alliance?
YES NO
2. Are you renewing your membership with the Eco-Alliance?
YES NO
3. Would you like to help with specific projects?
Which issues?
4. Do you have any other comments or suggestions you would like to make regarding the Eco-Alliance?

**BOWEN ISLAND
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Years**

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