

**BOWEN ISLAND'S SUSTAINABLE FUTURE:  
A STRATEGY FOR THE USE AND DISPOSITION OF MUNICIPAL  
LANDS IN SNUG COVE**

**Report to Municipal Council**

**Prepared by:**

**Surplus Lands Working Group**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Mandate of the Surplus Lands Working Group

In 2005, the Bowen Island Municipality acquired approximately 39 acres of land from the Greater Vancouver Regional District in the Snug Cove area for \$2,000,000. These lands are referred to as the Surplus Lands. When the land was acquired, it was contemplated that some of the land would be reserved for community use, while other portions might be sold off as development parcels in order to recover the initial outlay, and accrued interest.

Additionally, these lands could be used to generate funds for future construction of community facilities and related infrastructure projects.

Municipal Council appointed the Surplus Land Working Group (SLWG), with a mandate to provide recommendations to Council regarding the preferred land uses for the Surplus Lands, and a corresponding strategy for land disposal, with respect to achieving cost recovery of the surplus lands debt, debt servicing costs, and Snug Cove planning costs.

The Working Group consisted of the following members:

Neil Boyd – Chair  
Sara Baker  
Ross Carter  
Jim Cox  
Frits DeVries  
Ross McDonald  
Tom Rafael  
Councillor David Wrinch (Council Liaison)  
Councillor Lisa Barrett (Council Liaison)

Isabell Hadford, Chief Administrative Officer and Michael Rosen, Planning Consultant assisted the Working Group in a resource capacity.

Council's objective is to determine the ultimate use of the Surplus Lands and the cost recovery opportunities in a manner that respects the social, economic, and environmental values of the community. Council has indicated that the strategy must:

- consider both the short term and long term economic benefits for Snug Cove and the Island, more generally;
- take into account the social needs of the community, in particular the opportunities for creating affordable housing; and
- respect the environmental features of the lands in question.

Council has stated that the cost recovery strategy should comply with the sustainability principles captured within the Islands Trust Policy Statement, the GVRD's Sustainable Region Initiative (SRI), the Municipality's Mission Statement, the spirit and intent of the Island wide Official Community Plan, and the Snug Cove Village Plan.

## **1.2 Description of the Surplus Land Working Group Process**

The SLWG has:

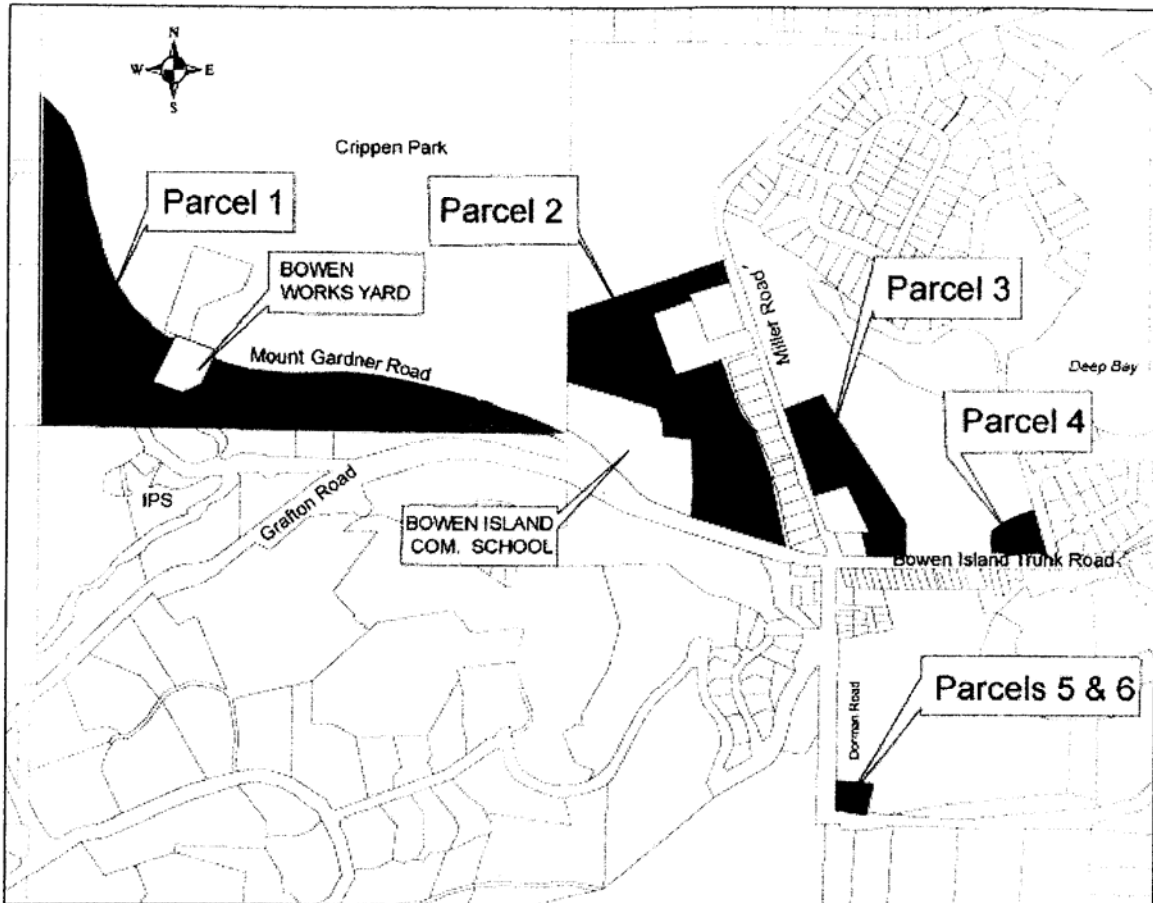
- Examined the existing appraisals undertaken at the time of the Surplus Lands purchase.
- In consultation with the Civic Facilities Working Group and Municipal staff determined the general dollar amount of the "cost recovery" target
- In consultation with the Bowen Island Community Housing Association and other community members, assessed community needs for affordable housing, and commercial and light industrial uses, to determine land use priorities for the surplus lands
- Focused on Surplus Lands within Site 1 as the prime initial rezoning and development areas for early Surplus Land cost recovery (to be discussed in greater detail in Conclusions and Recommendations)
- Examined various options for the use and ultimate disposal of those areas:
  - Established possible cost recovery from the sale of parcels based on a number of land use options developed by the SLWG and the assessment of a residual land value report from a consultant land economist, Paul Rollo of G. P. Rollo and Associates.
  - Considered the impact of development (economic, social and environmental) on Snug Cove as a village, as described in the Snug Cove Village Plan
- Identified Site 2, Site 3 and the former Library Lot as areas to be held for future community needs and development
- Provided recommendations based on planning documents (OCP, LUB, Municipality's Mission Statement, Snug Cove Plan, task force/staff/consultants reports, etc.) that pertain to Surplus Lands.

## 2.0 DESCRIPTION OF SURPLUS LANDS AND FORMER LIBRARY LOT

### 2.1 Basic Information on Surplus Lands

The Surplus Lands and former Library Lot are located within the Snug Cove area, the specific locations identified on Map 1. The following map and table provides some basic information about each of the four parcels.

Map 1: Location of Surplus Lands



#### PARCEL NUMBER

1  
2  
3  
Library Lot

#### SIZE

8.7 ha (21.6 acres)  
4.6 ha. (11.4 acres)  
1.0 ha (2.5 acres)  
0.8 ha (2 acres)

### 3.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

#### 3.1 Municipal Policy Framework – OCP / Snug Cove Plan

##### 3.1.1 Island Wide Official Community Plan

Within the island wide Official Community Plan, the Snug Cove area is the subject of a specific land use plan, and this plan will be addressed in the next section of this report. However, since Site 1 actually lies outside of the Snug Cove planning area, there are policies within the island wide Official Community Plan that do pertain to this location and they are set out below:

Site 1 – Rural Residential Designation

The OCP presently designates Site 1 as Rural 1. A minimum parcel size of 4 hectares (10 acres) is applied to areas designated Rural 1. Minimum parcel sizes shall generally be the same as the average lot size except where, in the opinion of Council, there is public benefit in clustering of lots. Dwelling density is limited to 1 dwelling unit per lot, except where the property is eligible for consideration for the provision of affordable housing, rental housing or special needs housing.

Terminal Creek and Site 1

Terminal Creek bisects Site 1 immediately to the east of the Municipal Works Yard. This portion of Terminal Creek and everything further downstream does not have any water licenses and is not being used as a domestic water source. Nevertheless, OCP **Section 5.1.2** applies, recognizing the importance of permanent and seasonal creeks and other wetlands and their buffer areas, for surface and ground-water supply, pollution and sediment control, flood control, erosion control, fisheries, wildlife, other flora and fauna, recreation and aesthetic values.

Hazardous Slopes and Environmentally Sensitive Areas

In **Section 5.1** the OCP notes, "...a system of designated Development Permit Areas, restrictive covenants, zoning regulations, public land dedication, rights of way and other mechanisms shall be adopted to protect environmentally sensitive areas, to protect life and property from natural hazards and to ensure the conservation of natural environmental features, functions and values of the Island." While a bylaw creating a hazard slope development permit area is still in the process of being enacted and a parallel bylaw creating an environmentally sensitive development permit area is still in draft stage, the OCP is clear about the need to ensure safety and to protect habitat.

### 3.1.2 Snug Cove Village Plan

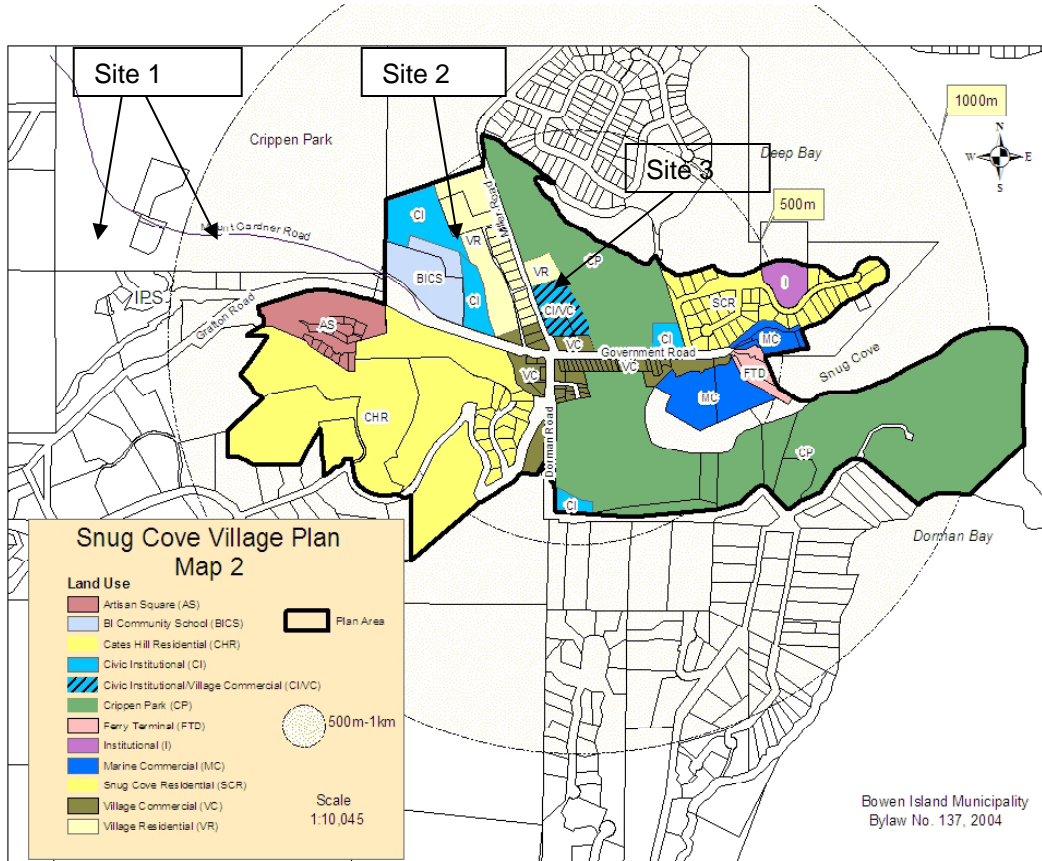
Council adopted the *Snug Cove Village Plan: A Plan to Guide Change in Snug Cove* in 2005. The plan provides a context, vision, land use guidance and transportation, and ferry and parking policies. In addition, it develops an implementation policy. Without restating the entire Plan, the following are those key elements of the Snug Cove Village Plan that directly impact on the future use of the "surplus lands".

- ❑ The **Vision Statement** of the Snug Cove Village Plan notes that Snug Cove Village will contain a mix of residential, commercial, marine transportation and community facility land uses; that the ferry terminal will continue to function as the gateway to the community; that the portion of the Park on the north side of Government Road will largely remain in its natural state except for limited commercial uses and community facilities; that commercial development will be concentrated in three locations within Snug Cove Village: the lower Cove, the crossroads (Miller and Government Roads) and Artisan Square – and that higher density housing in the form of attached dwellings or mixed use buildings may be further developed within the Village.
- ❑ **Section 4.1.3** speaks to higher density **residential development** within the Village centre and notes that such residential housing within the Village centre should be accommodated only if the housing is of a type that is consistent with the scale and character of the Village, and does not contribute to overall growth on the Island beyond that anticipated in the Official Community Plan. The section details residential development polices, including the encouragement of the development of new, affordable forms of ground-oriented higher density housing.
- ❑ **Section 4.1.4** recognizes the use of a portion of the Surplus Lands as the site or sites for **civic and community facilities** and details community / civic development policies.
- ❑ **Section 4.1.5** the Plan identifies a **peripheral area** within a 1 kilometer radius of the Miller Road / Government Road intersection as a transitional area between the Village and more rural Bowen Island. A significant portion of Site 1 is included within the periphery area. Specifically **Section 4.1.5** states that:

"The lands at the periphery of the Village center (within 1 kilometer radius of the Miller Road / Government Road intersection) need to be carefully managed in order to avoid the creation of a disjointed and sprawled Village center. Being at the periphery of the Village center, appropriate land uses and densities would be at a lesser scale and intensity than land situated within the Village centre. As well, it would desirable to avoid the development of commercial and community / civic facilities at the periphery of the Village

center, except in cases where it can be demonstrated that a proposed commercial use cannot be accommodated within the Village center and all options within the Village center have been exhausted. The intent is to provide a seamless transition between the land within the Village center and the rural land that is outside of the Cove.”

Map 2: Snug Cove Land Use Plan



### 3.1.3 Islands Trust Policy Statement

The Bowen Island Municipality, as a member of the Islands Trust, is directed to address certain matters in its Official Community Plan. Where a particular policy requires a municipality to address a particular matter, the Bowen Island Official Community Plan must contain policies that implement the policy stated by the Trust.

The Bowen Island OCP addresses those directive policies. They are concerned with ecosystem preservation and protection, stewardship of resources, and sustainable communities. The Islands Trust has approved the OCP.

### **3.1.4 Land Use Bylaw**

The Land Use Bylaw regulates the subdivision, development, and use of land. The surplus lands are currently zoned in the following manner in the Land Use Bylaw:

- Site 1 – Rural residential 1 (RR1) – Minimum Lot Size is 4 ha.
- Site 2 - P1 (a) – Passive Park
- Site 3 - P1 (a) – Passive Park
- Former Library Site – Comprehensive Development (CD-2 Cates Hill)

### **3.2 Municipal Financial Objectives**

The 38.72 acres of “Surplus Lands” were purchased from the Greater Vancouver Regional District in 2005 for \$2,000,000. Following a supportive vote in a municipal referendum, financing of the purchase was arranged through the BC Municipal Finance Authority. Prior to the referendum the Municipality indicated that a portion of the Surplus Lands would be sold to eliminate the debt and, additionally, to facilitate the creation of some civic facilities.

Council provided further direction to the Surplus Lands Working Group -- that the Group should identify opportunities for land disposal so that the \$2 million loan and accrued interest could be eliminated, in the short term.

### **3.3 Sustainability Principles**

In February 2007, Bowen Island Municipal Council struck a working group to develop a draft report for Council on a proposed sustainability framework to enable Council, staff, and the community to make decisions that best support Bowen Island’s Mission Statement. That Mission Statement is as follows:

In carrying out its mandate, Bowen Island Municipality will work towards conducting operations in a way that:

1. Improves the economic, environmental and social well-being for present and future generations;
2. Encourages and fosters community involvement;
3. Enhances the small, friendly, caring character of the community;
4. Maintains an open, accountable and effective operation; and
5. Preserves and enhances the unique mix of natural ecosystems and green spaces that Bowen Island possesses.

While the working group is to report in September, sustainability principles as embodied in the Mission Statement inform the Surplus Lands Working Group recommendations.

In addition to the work of the Sustainability Framework Task Force, two other Municipal initiatives relate to sustainability. Municipal Council has adopted *Built Green BC* recommendations as a framework for reviewing and approving rezoning applications. Council has also instructed the Planning Department to develop further green building criteria.

### **3.4 Sustainable Region Initiative (SRI)**

The Sustainable Region Initiative (SRI) is a comprehensive approach to the future of the Greater Vancouver region. It seeks to pass on to future generations a region that is at least as good a place to live as it is today. The SRI is the framework for sustainability for all programs and activities undertaken by the GVRD, and an important vehicle for defining the role of the GVRD and its relationships to other governments and agencies. The framework formulates medium-term strategies and immediate actions for the long term economic, social and environmental betterment of the region. Implementation is at three levels:

- GVRD corporate practices
- GVRD regional mandates and services
- the region as a whole, where the GVRD may be a facilitator or partner.

SRI identifies significant sites and features to be included in the parks system, as well as corridors to be considered in a network of regional greenways. Crucial strategies include focus on recreation and conservation. Bowen Island Municipal Council is working toward a Greenways definition and strategy for Bowen Island.

### **3.5 Housing Affordability**

As noted in the mandate of the Surplus Lands Working Group, the report must take into account the social needs of the community, in particular the opportunities for creating affordable housing. The need to examine and respond to affordable housing needs has been identified as a priority of Council. Secondary suites provide the bulk of current affordable housing on Bowen Island. The municipality's regulation of secondary suites, and the creation of affordable forms of housing in the transitional lands and Snug Cove Village portions of the Surplus Lands, will impact significantly the stock of affordable housing.

## 4.0 FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Description of Development Scenarios

Frits de Vries, one of the Working Group members, provided invaluable volunteer time in producing a number of development scenarios for the subject lands. These scenarios were developed for the primary purpose of testing their financial implications, and were reviewed and endorsed by the Working Group for that purpose. Illustrations of the various development scenarios are contained within the appendix of this report. It should be understood that these scenarios were intended for comparative purposes only and would need to be subject to considerably more detailed analysis, should they be pursued further. Their essential components are summarized in the following table and should be examined in conjunction with a review of the accompanying drawings.

<u>Site</u>	<u>Single Family Lots</u>	<u>Townhouse Units</u>	<u>Apartment Units</u>	<u>Commercial Space (sq. ft)</u>	<u>Civic (sq. ft)</u>
<b>1</b>					
1.1	19 (1 acre)				
1.2	40 cluster				
1.3	68 small				
1.4			90		
1.5	13 (1 acre)				56-106,000
1.6			50	40,000	
<b>2</b>					
2.1	9 (1 acre)				
2.2	16 (6000 sq. ft)		6	6,000	
2.3	16 cluster				
2.4		40			
2.5			60		
2.6			50	36,000	
2.7			176	20,000	

<u>Site</u>	<u>Single Family Lots</u>	<u>Townhouse Units</u>	<u>Apartment Units</u>	<u>Commercial Space (sq. ft)</u>	<u>Civic (sq. ft)</u>
<b>3</b>					
3.1	3 (1 Acre)		10	7,200	
3.2	17 cluster				
3.3		32			
3.4			42	30,000	
3.5					40-80,000
3.6			53		

As is evident, the development scenarios accommodated a range of housing densities and in some cases provided for mixed-use developments. During the course of the discussion, the Working Group identified additional development scenarios, and the Working Group acknowledges that there is a myriad of additional scenarios that could be generated. Having said that, it was determined that the above noted range of scenarios was broad enough to examine potential land values for the Surplus Lands. In compiling these scenarios, the Working Group was aware that these scenarios do not comply with the current OCP land use designations for Site 1, but, on the other hand, could be considered as meshing with other social and economic objectives of the OCP, and with the Mission Statement of the Bowen Island Municipality.

#### **4.2 Summary of Land Evaluation Report**

G. P. Rollo and Associates was retained by the Municipality to undertake a financial evaluation of the various development scenarios, with the intent of establishing land values for the Surplus Lands. These land values would represent the amount of money that a purchaser would be prepared to pay to acquire the land from the Municipality to build out the project for the various development scenarios.

A copy of the report prepared by G. P. Rollo and Associates and summary table is attached. The detailed pro forma analysis has not been appended to this report, but is available from the Planner at the Municipal Hall. The following are the key findings and conclusions from the report:

- 1) The financial feasibility of developing the properties has been examined using traditional developer pro formas, to determine what a developer could afford to pay to acquire the properties.

- 2) Whether being considered for new single family, multiple family or commercial land uses, the Bowen Island development market is very limited in potential, as over the recent past the new single family market has been less than 15 units per year, and there has been no market multiple family development that has occurred on the Island.
- 3) Based upon discussions with local realtors and developers, the annual demand for multiple family housing would likely be less than 25 units per year.
- 4) The market for new commercial space is very limited, possibly 5,000 to 6,000 sq. ft. of commercial space could be absorbed over the next 3-5 years.
- 5) The issue of whether a commercial or mixed residential and commercial development on Government Road may be economic is not likely to be a defining issue, as recent sales of properties along Government Road seem to indicate that purchasers are willing to acquire lands at prices that do not produce viable economic investments, as measured by traditional investment criteria. These acquisitions appear to be driven more by speculative or other motivations.
- 6) For the Site 1 single family scenarios, ranging from 19 - 68 single family lots, the maximum market demand would be in the order of 10 units per year, and therefore a phased disposition of the lands should be considered. Otherwise, developers would have to land bank and absorb holding costs that would require them to offer a lower price for the land.
- 7) The following assumptions were used to perform the analyses:
  - i) Single family lot prices would vary between \$200,000 and \$325,000 (depends on location, size, servicing and view potential).
  - ii) Multiple family strata prices would vary between \$324,000 and \$495,000.
  - iii) Commercial rents would vary between \$20 and \$30 net per sq.ft.
  - iv) Brad Hawthorn, Public Works Superintendent, has provided servicing costs.
  - v) Hard construction costs are based on discussions with local developers.
  - vi) Development or soft costs are based on industry standards.
- 8) Land values for Site 1 would range between \$977,000 to \$7,255,000 with the top end realized with 68 small single family lots. These values assume that the developer will be required to expend approximately \$1,300,000 to extend municipal water and sewer services to Site 1.
- 9) Land value for Site 2 (Government Road frontage) would be \$420,000 as small mixed-use parcel containing 6 residential units over 6,000 sq. ft. of commercial space. The remainder of Site 2 has a value between \$745,000 and \$4,376,000 with the most realistic value realized by use of the parcel for 16 single family lots or 40 townhomes. The higher end value associated with a program of 176 units

and 20,000 sq. ft. of commercial space is unlikely to be realized in the short or medium term, as it is too dense a development for the Bowen Island market.

- 10) Land value for Site 3 (Government Road frontage) would range from \$505,000 to approximately \$2,000,000, based upon a program of 10 residential strata units on top of 7,000 sq. ft. of commercial rental space or 20 strata units on top of 14,000 sq. ft. rental. The value range for the remainder of Site 3 is \$376,000 - \$3,459,000, the higher end realized with townhouse development.
- 11) Based upon an objective of recapturing funds to eliminate the \$2 million debt used to acquire surplus lands from GVRD, the recommended surplus lands disposition strategy is to focus initially on the Mount Gardner Road parcel (Site 1). This parcel could be sold in phases to easily realize the required \$2 million and leave the Municipality with the ability to market the remainder in phases. This would also allow the Municipality to generate the maximum revenues from Site 1. Sites 2 and 3 could be held off the market to allow a phased sale of lands to take place at a time when demand for residential and commercial space is stronger, and hence the value of these lands is higher.

## **5.0 ALTERNATIVE LAND DISPOSITION SCENARIOS**

As we note in our conclusions and recommendations, we determined that in none of our scenarios would we consider the sale, in the short-term, of any of Site 2, the 11 acre parcel surrounding the Bowen Island Community School (and the likely location of the Civic Facilities complex). We also decided that the Library Lot at the head of Carter Road would be banked for future use, either commercial, residential or institutional, or a mix of the above. We focused our attention rather on Site 1, the 21 acre parcel on the south side of Mount Gardner Road, and on a parcel of 0.5 acre that is part of the 2.5 acres of Site 3, fronting Government Road to the east of the former gas station. We have, however, unanimously concluded that Council should not consider the sale of any part of Site 3 until a comprehensive plan for the lower Snug Cove is in place (see section 6.0, Conclusions and Recommendations). Our focus for short term disposition is, accordingly, solely on Site 1.

Our Working Group has decided to provide Council with three alternative land disposition scenarios that differ with respect to meeting Council's financial and social objectives. In summary, one of the scenarios is based upon maximizing economic return, another attempts to strike a balance between financial and social values, and a third focuses on minimal sales from Site 1, and the creation of a land bank.

### **5.1 Scenario One: Maximizing Economic Return on Land Use**

In the first scenario, the Surplus Lands Working Group is orienting itself towards maximizing short-term economic returns by disposing of all of Site 1 (see attached drawing, Scenario One). In this option 40 to 68 single-family homes would be developed on Site 1, and would likely generate a revenue of between \$4 and \$7.5 million, according to the financial analysis. We caution that these numbers are necessarily speculative, and we would not want Council to proceed on the assumption that they represent more than best estimates in our current market.

The advantage of this scenario is that it potentially generates a substantial amount of revenue, in excess of repayment of the Surplus Lands debt. These funds could be used to support the development of the Civic Facilities; they could also be used to facilitate the purchase of land for affordable housing, or for the support of a housing authority, set up to administer rental units on Site 2, or elsewhere. The disadvantage of this proposal is that it fails to add appreciably to a diverse housing stock on Bowen Island, with its focus on single family homes on Site 1. The proposal also has the disadvantage of using all of Site 1, without the possibility of retaining any portion as a land bank for future uses.

## **5.2 Scenario Two: Diversification of Housing, and Responding to “Housing Market Failure”**

In this scenario (see attached drawing, Scenario Two), some single family home lots on Site 1 are retained, as the revenue generated is more substantial than the revenue that can be generated from multi-family housing (see section 4.0, Financial Analysis). But the emphasis is on the provision of both market multi-family housing on Site 1, and on the provision of rental housing. More specifically, 30 single family homes, 40 townhouse/apartment units, and 25 rental housing units have been allocated for Site 1 for a total of 95 units. The single family homes should generate approximately \$3 million, and, although estimates for revenue that can be generated for townhouses and apartments are somewhat speculative, the best available data from Rollo and Associates suggest that 40 townhouse/apartment units could generate approximately \$1 to \$1.5 million for the raw land; there would be no revenue generated by the donation of land for the construction of 25 rental housing units. Accordingly, Scenario Two could produce a total return of between \$4 and \$4.5 million. Again, Council must recognize that these numbers are only best estimates, based on available data.

The advantage of Scenario Two is that about 70 per cent of the proposed housing is multi-family, in contrast to an absence of any multi-family in Scenario One. Scenario Two generates approximately 95 housing units, 65 of which would be multi-family units, necessarily more affordable and more accessible than single-family homes. As is noted in the conclusions and recommendations, the Working Group is unanimous that a critical need that should be met in the disposition of the Surplus Lands is the provision of more housing choices and more affordable housing on Bowen Island. The disadvantage of Scenario Two is that it generates less revenue than Scenario One, while similarly using all of Site 1. While Scenario Two need not result in the loss of any more green space than Scenario One (and perhaps even less loss of green space, given the nature of multi-family housing), it will add more density to the periphery of the Cove, generating 95 housing units, in contrast to the 40 to 65 units that would be generated by Scenario One.

## **5.3 Scenario Three: Creating A Land Bank: The Small Footprint**

In this scenario (see attached drawing, Scenario Three), the focus once again is on Site 1. As is noted in the conclusions and recommendations in discussion of strategy for Site 1, it is best to think of this site as one that has a number of natural boundaries, or put differently, to think of this site as having three different areas for development: 1) several acres to the north of Carter Road, 2) several acres between the public works yard, and the road to the Christian Science camp, and 3) approximately 10 acres between Government Road and Mount Gardner Road, running from the school to the public works yard. In this scenario, the Municipality generates revenue by selling land for 20 to 30 single family lots on the areas furthest from Snug Cove, and retaining most or all of the 10 acres between Government Road and Mount Gardner Road for future

use. This would generate between \$2 and \$3 million. Accordingly, the revenue to be generated in Scenario Three would range from \$2 to \$3 million.

The advantage of Scenario Three is that it generates sufficient income to retire the debt without using much of the Surplus Lands. In contrast to Scenarios One and Two, where between 40 and 95 housing units could be created, Scenario Three would only generate between a maximum of 30 units, all of which would be single-family dwellings. The attraction of this proposal is that it retains much of the Surplus Lands for future use, whether as green space or for commercial/residential/industrial development, and still produces sufficient revenue to retire the Surplus Lands debt. The proposal also allows Council and the community more time to consider planning on the affected lands. The disadvantage of this scenario is that it does little to address the lack of diversity in our existing housing stock, and will produce little if any revenue in the short term that could be used to generate income for civic facilities or for the provision of land and infrastructure related to affordable housing.

## **6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 General Land Use and Disposition Strategy**

As we noted above in the discussion of the planning context for the Surplus Lands (see section 3.0, Planning Context), we are influenced, if not bound in our decision-making, by the Official Community Plan for Snug Cove. This part of the OCP, passed by Council in 2005, applies to Sites 2 and 3, the 11 acres surrounding the school and the 3.5 acres adjacent to the former gas station and the RCMP detachment. The OCP contemplates multi-family residential uses for these parcels at densities of 12 to 17 units per acre permissible. As noted above, although the OCP policy could be changed, the current policy framework does influence our thinking, as it represents relatively recent municipal decision-making with respect to these lands. The library site represents no particular difficulty, insofar as current zoning is concerned; it is a single lot of slightly less than one acre, and we do not contemplate any disposition of this lot in the near term. Site 1, on the other hand, is currently designated in the OCP as a 10 acre minimum lot size, permitting the building of no more than two single family homes, and any of the scenarios that have been outlined in this report would necessitate an amendment to the OCP.

We are guided in our decision-making with respect to all of these lands by the notion that Snug Cove represents a village core. Density is to be greatest in the village core, and diminishes as one moves away from the Cove; multi-family housing is to be encouraged in the village core – specifically, on Sites 2 and 3. Accommodating density increases within and adjacent to the Cove is essential to the creation of a vibrant mixed use village as espoused in the vision statement in the Snug Cove Village Plan.

We are also guided by the peripheral lands policy in the Snug Cove Village Plan that calls for lower densities as the distance from the Cove increases. Even with 95 units, as proposed in Scenario Two, the gross density would be less than 5 units per acre. That is significantly less than anticipated in the core of the Village (12.5 to 17.5 units per acre). For comparison purposes, the proposed Belterra project located just south of Site 1 has a gross density of 2 units per acre, and does not have the road access opportunities that Site 1 does.

We also believe that it is important to address what has been termed “housing market failure” on Bowen Island. The current entry-level price for a single family home on Bowen Island is close to \$500,000; this means that the average family income required to carry a mortgage, with 10 per cent down, is approximately \$150,000. As our most recent census indicates that the average family income on Bowen Island is approximately \$75,000, it is clear that we have a situation in which the majority of Bowen residents could currently not afford to buy a home here. If one is now renting on Bowen with less than \$150,000 in family income, one will have little chance of home ownership, unless able to secure substantial financial support from family or friends.

There are a number of responses that one could make with respect to this reality. First, a diversity of housing stock will ease this strain, to at least some extent. Apartments

and townhouses, priced from \$300,000 to \$400,000, would enable entry into the market for those with family incomes of \$100,000 or more. Additionally, the provision of rental housing could meet the needs of long-term residents of the island, individuals who have a demonstrated commitment to the community, but little hope of being able to enter what is now a very expensive housing market; there may, additionally be mechanisms that permit regulated ownership in these circumstances.

For example, Council may wish to provide three acres of land on Site 1 for the construction of affordable housing. One acre might permit 10 townhouses, with 1200 square feet of space in each, another acre might provide 10 two-story one and two bedroom apartment units, and a third might provide five small cottages of 1200 square feet. The units might be rental, or they might be ownership, with any profit on sale limited to annual increases in the consumer price index. Those with experience in affordable housing have suggested to us that this latter scenario has the advantage of creating a pride in ownership, beyond the scope of a rental agreement. In any event, our task is not to bring forward the most workable mechanism for affordable housing, but to suggest to Council that a portion of Site 1 should be set aside for the provision of this kind of housing.

Accordingly, you will see that a critical part of our recommendations in Scenario Two involves the provision of both multi-family housing options and long-term rental housing/affordable housing options. We should add that we do not view affordable housing as social housing, but rather as housing, which ensures that, individuals with a diversity of incomes, lifestyles and values remain a critical part of the community.

We also think it is important to place the choices that we are making into a social context. On the one hand, there are those who argue against urbanization and increasing density on Bowen Island, and who view multi-family housing as synonymous with the destruction of a rural way of life. On the other hand, there is a virtually unanimous view that Bowen Island should not devolve into an enclave for the wealthy, and that our environment should not be compromised, simply to accommodate the urban sprawl of the Lower Mainland.

We believe that the best means to accomplish these latter objectives -- the maintenance of an economically and socially diverse community, and protection of our environment -- is to provide more housing options within a relatively densely populated village core. It is our conviction that communities work with community centres, where individuals can live, meet, shop, socialize, and engage in a diversity of artistic, political and athletic pursuits. If we want to make Bowen Island more of a community, we must have more density in the village than in the periphery of the Island, and we must accommodate both a variety of forms of housing, and a variety of types of access to these forms of housing.

**It is for these reasons that we have unanimously concluded that our preferential development scenario is Scenario Two, the sale of Site 1, with single family lots, market townhouses and apartments, and affordable**

housing components; we have suggested a total of 95 units, and while we recognize that Council may wish, for a variety of reasons, to consider a different level of density for Site 1, we are convinced that any strategy should include an amendment to the OCP to provide for significantly more density than currently exists, and for the provision of single family, multi-family, and affordable housing.

## **6.2 Strategy for Site 1**

### **Amend the Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw, prepare a series of development conditions and then market the property to the development community**

Should Municipal Council agree with our suggested course of action, then the first step would be to commence the process of amending the Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw to accommodate the type of development scenario that we envision for Site 1. This process will require both technical expertise from staff and input from the community. We envision that our Working Group could assist Council and staff in creating the zoning package and development conditions. As a general principle, we suggest that the zoning package not be overly specific or prescriptive so that it will accommodate the opportunity for creative development proposals, albeit within the framework of the density, housing mix, and affordability principles that have been articulated in the report.

Once the OCP and Land Use Bylaw have been amended then the Municipality could commence the marketing program that should consist of preparing a Proposal Call that would outline the Municipality's expectations. The Proposal Call would outline the community's objectives for the land, contain the zoning package, and would invite the development community to submit proposals to the Municipality identifying the proposed development concept and the price they would pay for the land. Our Working Group could also assist the Municipality with the Proposal Call process.

Based upon the recommendations of the Rollo report, marketing of Site 1 in a phased manner would be the preferred approach. With this in mind, the single family component should be the first phase, with the market multi family components coming in on in subsequent phases. The approximate 3 acre site for non-market housing (rental, price restricted, etc.) could be subdivided off as part of Phase 1 so that its development could be pursued separately.

As noted above, the current OCP policy and the zoning for Site 1 contemplate a maximum of two homes on the 21 acres. We reject this zoning as it is inappropriate for these lands, and suggest an amendment to the official community plan that would permit up to five housing units per acre. This level of density would distinguish Site 1 from Sites 2 and 3 in the village core, where density is to be permitted at a level of 12 to 17 units per acre; we accept the general policy of decreasing density as one moves

from the village centre to the village periphery. A density of four units per acre on Site 1 would be roughly comparable to the current density in the Deep Bay neighbourhood, on Miller, Melmore and Senator Roads – and Site 1 is approximately the same distance from the village centre as the Deep Bay neighbourhood.

We might add that we view the multi-family options on Site 1 as best located in close proximity to the community school and the site of the civic facilities centre. Single family homes are more appropriate for sites closer to Green Road and Carter Road (near the Christian Science Centre and the Island Pacific School respectively). The planning of the various components of Site 1 should be undertaken taking into account potential linkages to adjacent properties where applicable.

Another important initiative that must be pursued by the Municipality to enable Site 1 to be developed at the proposed densities is the upgrading of the Snug Cove sewage treatment plant. For Site 1 to command the values as projected by Rollo and Associates, prospective purchasers and developers will need to have the certainty that Site 1 can be serviced by the municipal sewer system.

### **6.3 Strategy for Site 2**

#### **Refrain from disposing any of Site 2 until the civic facility planning process is completed**

As we have indicated above, we do not think it is appropriate, in the short-term, to consider the sale or disposition of any part of Site 2. This parcel has been identified as the future site of the civic facilities buildings, and, in the longer term, it is quite likely that additional residential and commercial possibilities will evolve, as the civic facilities buildings evolve. We are encouraged that the first two of our scenarios could generate a significant amount of revenue for the construction of these civic facilities.

### **6.4 Strategy for Site 3**

#### **Retain Site 3 until there is a better understanding of how Site 3 can be comprehensively planned in the context of the new ferry marshalling strategy and of the linkages and relationships with the adjacent former gas station site, the RCMP site, and the future civic facilities on Site 2.**

In our early discussions we considered only one potential sale on Site 3, a commercial/residential mix on an already subdivided one-half acre of Site 3, fronting Government Road. That proposal would have allowed significant commercial space, with 10 to 20 units above for residential housing. After careful consideration we have unanimously rejected the development of this site in the short term, as such a move would be pre-emptive, without a clear sense or vision of how the lower Cove is to take shape. We note, particularly, the potential impact of ferry marshalling, and the key locations of the former gas station and the RCMP detachment, immediately adjacent to

Site 3. A significant opportunity exists to plan the redevelopment of the old gas station, the RCMP site, and Site 3 in a comprehensive manner that takes advantage of this critical corner in Snug Cove in a manner that enhances the public realm.

## 6.5 Strategy for Library Site

We do not recommend sale of this lot adjacent to Carter Road in the near term. We do, however, view it as a lot that has mixed use potential in the longer term.

## 6.6 Recommendations to Municipal Council

There was general consensus by the Working Group that the following recommendations should be provided to Council:

- 6.6.1 With respect to a **land disposition strategy**, pursue Scenario Two, that includes the sale of Site 1, with a mix of single family lots, market townhouses and apartments, and affordable housing components.
- 6.6.2 Commence the process of **amending the Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw for Site 1**, preparing a series of development conditions and then marketing the property to the development community.
- 6.6.3 Consider **rezoning Site 1** for a total density of approximately 95 units, recognizing that the zoning package should also address density controls through the use of floor area ratio requirements.
- 6.6.4 Consider setting aside land within Site 1 to accommodate 20 – 30 units of **affordable housing** on a parcel of approximately 3 acres, meaning that the land would be made available by the Municipality to the “developer” of the affordable housing at no cost.
- 6.6.5 Pursue the upgrading of the **sewage treatment plant** in order to provide sewage capacity for the future development of Site 1
- 6.6.6 Refrain from disposing any of **Site 2** until the civic facility planning process is completed
- 6.6.7 Refrain from disposing any of **Site 3** until there is a better understanding of how Site 3 can be comprehensively planned in the context of the new ferry marshalling strategy and of the linkages and relationships with the adjacent former gas station site, the RCMP site, and the future civic facilities on Site 2.
- 6.6.8 Refrain from disposing of the **library lot** adjacent to Carter Road in the short term

- 6.6.9 Maintain the role of the **Surplus Lands Working Group** as an advisory body to Council that could assist during the preparation of the Surplus Lands bylaw amendments and the proposal call process

Although not endorsed by all Working Group members, it is important for Council to be cognizant of the following recommendations that certain Working Group members felt passionate about and should be pursued by Council:

- 6.6.10 Undertake a **new comprehensive overview and vision of Snug Cove** and its surroundings, incorporating the ferry marshalling concept (particularly the "Ekistics Plan"), the existing municipal policy framework OCP/Snug Cove Plan, the Island's interest in affordable housing, and the Surplus Lands Working Group and the other working groups
- 6.6.11 Consider locating the municipal hall and other community functions on the "gas station / RCMP / Site 3" corner in order to create a **prominent civic presence** with the possibility of a civic square
- 6.6.12 Allocate 25% of the units on the Surplus Lands for **affordable housing**

**Appendix A**  
**Alternative Development Concepts – Frits de Vries**

*(To be inserted)*

**Appendix B**  
**Land Evaluation Report – G. P. Rollo and Associates**

*(To be inserted)*