

# Pender Harbour and Area Residents Association

*... our communities association*

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January 21, 2025

To: SCRD Board  
Via Area A Director, Leonard Lee, Leonard.Lee@scrd.ca:

*Cc Hon. Ravi Kahlon, Housing Minister; Hon. Randene Neil, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship; the SCRD Board*

## **Subject: Urgent Call for Action: Addressing Housing Challenges in Our Community**

Dear SCRD Board Members,

We understand that the SCRD has been granted an extension until December 2025 to implement bylaws in response to Provincial Legislation Bill 44, which states in part:

*Secondary suites and/or accessory dwelling units are allowed province-wide in single-family residential zones ... in all municipalities and regional district electoral areas.*

While we recognize the importance of thorough planning, we urge you to act now to address the immediate housing challenges facing our community.

The intent of Bill 44 is clear: to secure more housing within communities. Delaying action undermines this goal, particularly in a region like ours that is experiencing an acute housing shortage. Secondary suites, detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and other multi-unit housing options are desperately needed to provide more affordable alternatives for low- and middle-income families with children, renters, and seniors.

### **The Case for Immediate Action**

Extensions delay residents' ability to plan for gentle density on their single-family lots. While we appreciate the ongoing updates to the Official Community Plan (OCP) and infrastructure studies, Area A urgently requires solutions now—especially for rental housing and homes for seniors and families. Implementing the necessary changes under Bill 44 immediately can serve as an incremental fix while longer-term planning continues.

We strongly encourage the SCRD Board to:

1. **Develop updated guidelines and bylaws to allow increased density**, including attached and detached dwelling units on all single family lots provided, of course, setbacks, sewage, water, onsite parking, vistas and height restrictions are maintained per the bylaws.

2. **Reevaluate existing restrictive bylaws** (such as Bylaw 337: 506, 611.1, 1011 and almost all other Country Residential, Residential and Rural Residential zoning which hinder progress toward solving the housing crisis.

These steps would help address the critical housing shortage, support the creation of more rental options, and ensure homeowners and builders have the clarity they need to plan and develop responsibly.

## **Proposed Solutions**

1. **Increase Maximum ADU Sizes**

To better accommodate families and couples, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) must be allowed larger sizes. The current maximum of 55 sq m under Bylaw 337 is insufficient for full-time living. Similarly, the 90 sq m cap under Bylaw 722 restricts the development of much-needed two- and three-bedroom units. Standardizing larger ADU sizes across bylaws would encourage development and meet some of the housing needs of our community.

2. **Address Infrastructure Needs**

Increased density requires supporting infrastructure. The SCRD should explore ways to help homeowners retroactively manage septic and water needs. Rather than focusing on restrictive building requirements, the SCRD can play a proactive role by:

- Supporting modern, space-efficient septic systems for smaller lots.
- Developing a community sewer plan for high-density areas, such as downtown Madeira Park.

These measures would empower homeowners and developers to be part of the solution and ensure that infrastructure improvements align with community growth.

## **Conclusion**

The SCRD has a critical opportunity to make a significant impact by implementing the changes required under Bill 44 well ahead of the provincial deadline. Acting now will alleviate housing shortages, create more rental options, and support incremental growth without overburdening infrastructure.

We urge the Board to prioritize this issue and take swift, decisive action. Your leadership is essential to creating a more livable and sustainable future for all residents in Area A.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Peter Robson  
President, PHARA