



## **Our Advocacy Agenda**

A healthy regional economy doesn't happen by accident. It grows where the rules, infrastructure, and investment climate make it possible for entrepreneurs, builders, and employers to act. For communities across the Shuswap, economic opportunity increasingly depends on whether local policy frameworks can keep pace with changing market realities such as housing demand, remote work, tourism growth, aging demographics, and the need for modern infrastructure.

The advocacy priorities outlined by the Shuswap Economic Development Society are therefore focused on removing structural barriers to investment while strengthening the foundations that enable communities to grow sustainably. In practice, this means ensuring that key infrastructure such as water, wastewater, and gigabit broadband is in place; enabling a wider range of housing options that reflect real market demand; and modernizing planning and zoning policies so they support, rather than unintentionally constrain, private sector investment.

### **1. Infrastructure**

- Water/wastewater servicing extension to Scotch Creek to enable mixed-use development.
- Sorrento / Blind Bay Urban Hub – planning policy enablement of intensification of use (e.g. lower parking standards, increased building height, reduced setbacks, greater lot coverage).
- Village centres densification/investment opportunity including missing middle commerce and mixed-use hotel/housing/commercial.
- Industrial land development: 1. Pursue shovel-ready status for Area C (Tappen north) 5.5 quarters zoned in OCP; 2. Promote existing North Scotch Creek.
- Gigabit Broadband – 100% connectivity.

### **2. Housing Choice and Affordability**

- Top-tier desires: 1. Assisted and independent living seniors housing; 2. Secondary suites (attached to primary residences); 3. Smaller minimum house sizes; 4. Accessory dwelling units.
- Mid-tier desires: 1. More mixed-use buildings in village centres; 2. Three residential units on a property; 3. Multi-family (duplexes, apartments, condos, townhouses); 4. Innovative neighbourhoods (e.g. eco-village, agrihood).

### **3. Investment-Enabling Planning Policy**

- Hybrid code-driven updating of Official Community Plans and Zoning Bylaws.
- Home Industry 1 and Home Industry 2 definition to create a new mid-tier home-based business intensity opportunity for 1 ha zoning (RR1, RR2, RR3, where home industry is not currently permitted).
- Enable up to two (principal dwelling plus attached secondary suite or accessory dwelling unit) to three residential units (principal dwelling plus attached secondary suite plus accessory dwelling unit) on all residential zoning as permitted with water/sewer servicing, and with proof of water/sewer capacity for independently-serviced properties. Current policy: maximum 1.
- As an enabler of infill and intensification, consider extension of water/sewer services, with priority one to Scotch Creek as a desire expressed in Investment Attraction Strategy engagement. E.g. R1 min .35 acres with water/sewer services otherwise min 2 ha (2.47 acres).

- Enable Accessory Commercial Units (ACU) in expansion zone for Town Centre Commercial Zone (Sorrento) to encourage commercial expansion in “downtown” Sorrento.
- Add new commercial zoning (or ACU zoning) with focus on village centres/village centre expansion zones to nurture village centre node development.
- Use more comprehensive development zoning to enable mixed-use.
- Explore further industrial zoning opportunity in addition to Scotch Creek and Area C (North Bay).
- In all commercial zones, permit manufacturing associated with retail (craft) – including small scale brewpubs and distilleries) to enable agrifood sector development, and village centres animation.
- Consider exemption of all non-residential uses from parking standards and secondary suites/accessory dwelling units with a focus on nurturing Sorrento/Blind Bay commercial intensification, housing choice/affordability, and better enterprise investment models.
- Conduct a parking study (drone) to establish each of peak and non-peak time use to establish evidence-based rationale for reduction of non-residential parking standards.
- Consider further cluster zoning (CH1, CH2) vs current grandfathered zoning.
- Consider a fast-track approvals process for non-residential development.
- Consider a development standards review (lighting, pavement widths, sidewalk requirements, storm ditches/filtration vs piping, soil depth on new properties, etc.) from the perspective of lower cost asset management/lower business and development costs that translate to purchase price/lease rates.
- Consider additional site coverage in C1 (Town Centre – Sorrento), C4 (Highway Commercial), C5 (Tourist Commercial) and C6 (Waterfront Commercial) to 70% serviced, 60% unserviced (current 60/50), and in C2, C3 to 60% serviced, 50% unserviced (current 50/40) to nurture intensification of property use that contributes to better business investment models. BC range 50-85%.
- Develop new mixed-use zoning for key village centres: Sorrento, Blind Bay, Scotch Creek.
- Specific to C1 (Town Centre – Sorrento), nurture village centre development via intensification policies (smaller parcel size (current min. is 0.5 acres) more use permissions, lower setback requirements, greater lot coverage, greater building height).
- Apply C1 zoning to other village centres (e.g. Celista).
- Consider smaller R2 (Medium Density Residential) parcel sizing (current minimum SF 700 m<sup>2</sup> - .17 acres, Duplex 1000 sq. m, multi-family dwelling 1400 sq. m.) to nurture housing choice and affordability via smaller parcel/unit sizing.
- Reduce number of zones by increasing number of permissions in each zone. Note for e.g. Area D commercial zoning has eight zones: C1 – Town Centre Commercial; C2 – Community Commercial; C3 – Neighbourhood Commercial; C4 – Highway Tourist Commercial; C5 – Tourist Commercial; C6 – Waterfront Commercial; C7 – Local Service Commercial; C8 – Local Neighbourhood Commercial. E.g. the Town of Okotoks (performance-based hybrid code), population 35,000, has a total of only nine zones, including only two commercial zones. This simplification of policy framework is significantly more enabling for investors/builders/developers.
- Produce zoning maps that are easier to understand for investment interests – e.g. single page high resolution PDF. Current: <https://web.csr.bc.ca/maps/?viewer=public>
- Implement Areas D and F Housing Needs Assessments (<https://www.csr.bc.ca/Archive.aspx?AMID=69>, 2022) that have identified a multitude of planning policy initiatives (Housing Action Plan Strategies – approx.. pages 79-88) devoted to enhancing housing choice and affordability.