

BOWEN ISLAND RESILIENT COMMUNITY HOUSING

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2025



**BIRCH**

Bowen Island Resilient  
Community Housing

PREPARED BY: ROBYN FENTON & QUENTIN BECK

# TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Bowen Island Resilient Community Housing and all people on Nex̱w̱lélex̱m are guests on unceded land. A complex web of people live and have lived, fished, traveled, raised families, and left their marks on and around this land.

Our organization has taken up the challenge to be intentional in determining the sort of marks that we leave on this land, and on those who host us. We are connected to these Nations and cultures and that we recognize that our challenge is to achieve Reconciliation through Truth.

As an organization focused on housing, we recognize that land and home are deeply connected. We are committed to advancing housing solutions in a way that honours Indigenous history, presence, and stewardship, and supports a respectful and inclusive community for all.

Our land acknowledgement is a living statement that will change as our understanding and acknowledgement of the wrongs done to Indigenous people grows. We are dedicated to honouring and respecting all people by creating spaces of living, gathering, and belonging.

BIRCH welcomes everyone's interest, thoughts, and contributions to this important work.

**BOWEN ISLAND | NEX̱W̱LÉLEX̱M**

# A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

What a year! After many years of diligent and determined work, our partnership with Bowen Island Municipality has transformed BIRCH from a group of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers to a strong organization with multiple projects and responsibilities, new Board Directors, and paid staff members.

This progress simply would not have happened without our Executive Director. Robyn Fenton has been the driving force behind BIRCH for more than a decade and we simply would not be here without her generosity and dedication. Our entire community owes her a debt of thanks, and we are far better off because of her involvement.

We also must thank our partner: under the leadership of our very effective Mayor and Council, the relationship between BIRCH and Bowen Island Municipality has been transformed.

We are moving forward with their support and are tackling projects that will truly make a lasting difference to our community.

I must also acknowledge our friends at the Lookout Society. We are about to break ground on the Miller Road project and that building is only being created because they became involved and provided the track record and reputation that BC Housing needed in order to have confidence in the project. They have been fantastic partners and BIRCH has been included and welcomed at every turn.

Next year is full of promise! I want to thank all our Board Directors, supporters, and our entire community for their hard work which is resulting in more homes for community members.



*David McCullum*

**DAVID MCCULLUM**

BOARD CHAIR

# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2025 was a momentous year for BIRCH. After 8 years of dedicated effort by a volunteer working board and a part-time, part-paid staffer – this year we reached a milestone. Bowen Island Municipality, through grants provided by the Housing Accelerator Fund, allocated \$450,000 for 3 years of operational funds to move BIRCH to a new level as an organization.

In 2025 we hired 3 part-time staff, creating a dynamic, multi-skilled team ready to tackle the strategic priorities set in front of us. We have been busy setting up systems, policies, budgets, managing projects – such as lot 1 – and engaging professional consultants to assist us to build BIRCH into a sustainable organization that can serve the housing needs of Bowen Island for decades to come.

This year, I have 3 people I want to thank specifically who I consider indispensable to having got us to where we are today.

Tim Wake, now a municipal councilor, but in 2017 was a Bowen Island resident seeing a need in our community and wanting to help, founded a nonprofit society – Foxglove Community Housing Trust. He and I met, having this shared passion for community housing, and he saw something in me that gave him the confidence to “pass the torch” of leadership – and BIRCH was born. It is great to see it come full circle and have him back on the BIRCH board as a council representative.

David McCullum, who I first met almost exactly 8 years ago, responded to a call out for board members for this newly-renamed housing society. He and I planned to meet for a quick coffee at Artisan Eats to get to know each other – after about 2 hours of nonstop conversation we realized our values and mindset were very much aligned. He has been the steady guiding presence as board chair ever since, and I feel fortunate to now be able to count him as a friend.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robyn Fenton'.

**ROBYN FENTON**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

Daniel Martin, our dedicated manager of planning at Bowen Island Municipality, has been a supportive collaborator since BIRCH began. He was there to support the subdivision of Lot 3, creating the lot that will soon be Hemlock Hill Village. And among the many other ways he has been supportive over the years - it is his efforts towards securing over a million dollars for Bowen Island from the Housing Accelerator Fund, that have had a profound effect. The HAF funds are allowing BIRCH to substantially move the lot 1 project forward, and are setting us up to become a successful, sustainable organization able to provide the community with the housing it needs to grow and thrive. I believe city planners - for better or for worse - can often be the hidden force behind substantial changes in a community. And in our case, Daniel, as the quiet, steady and more-than-capable leader of our planning department, has been very much for the better of our little island. We are lucky to have him.

There are many more people to thank and who have supported BIRCH over the years - and I look forward to thanking them in the many annual reports to come.

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## BIRCH 2025 AT A GLANCE

**\$450K**

Operational funding secured

**25 UNITS**

In development, Hemlock Hill

**3 STAFF**

Hired in 2025

**546**

Volunteer Hours

# ABOUT BIRCH

## Vision

Every Bowen Island Community Member has access to a safe and healthy home.

## Mission

BIRCH creates diverse housing options for Bowen Island, contributing to a sustainable community with a resilient population.

## Values

- We are engaged, trustworthy and reliable.
- We act with integrity, respect and honesty.
- Our Work is innovative, professional and effective.
- With our stakeholders, we are transparent, inclusive and responsive.

## BIRCH'S Role and Mandate

Our mandate as a community housing organization is to create an inventory of housing options to suit the diverse and evolving needs of the Bowen Island community, which will:

- Be permanently community-owned / non-market
- Be high quality, durable and safe
- Suit a diverse range of income levels
- Provide options for tenure such as rental, co-operative and ownership

# 2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

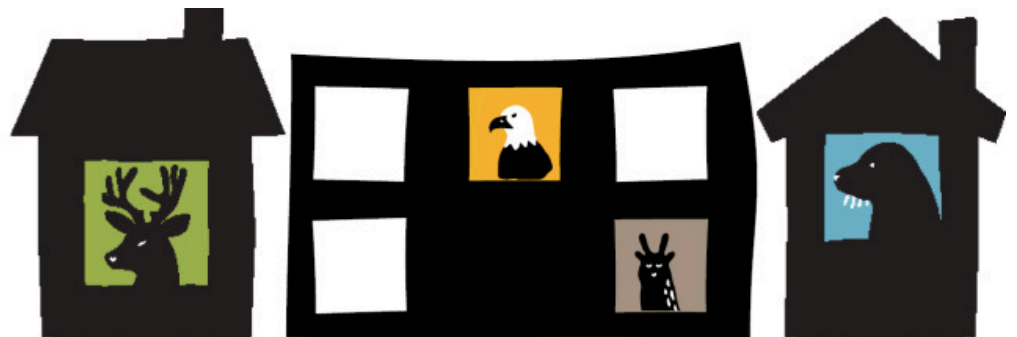
- Signed partnering agreement with Bowen Island Municipality
- Identification of Strategic priorities and development of Strategic Plan for BIRCH in consultation with Vantage Point Consulting
- Ongoing consultation with Vantage Point Consulting to develop working plan, policies and procedures
- Ongoing consultation to create Business Plan, including road map of financial sustainability
- Creation of Governance, Finance and Bowen Island Municipality Referrals Committees
- 2 Referrals from BIM council (rezoning) received and reviewed
- Lot 1 – \$150k funding received from BIM, including engaging consultants

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# RESPONSIBILITIES

In 2025 BIRCH signed a partnering agreement with Bowen Island Municipality and through that agreement will be providing services to specifically work towards building the organization and the creation of non-market housing to serve the Bowen Island Community inclusive of the following responsibilities:

- Work with municipality and other partners to identify possible opportunities for non-market housing developments
- Work with partners and funders as appropriate to develop or procure housing
- Work towards long-term sustainability for the organization, including financial sustainability.
- Develop and maintain, tenant qualifications, selection process/criteria, waitlist
- Act as community resource for non-market housing, including, support BIM staff



*“To build capacity in the non-profit housing sector on Bowen Island, and support a professional society working tirelessly to create affordable housing on Bowen Island, the Municipality entered into a three-year partnering agreement with the Bowen Island Resilient Community Housing Society (BIRCH). This agreement will provide BIRCH with stable funding to build their organization and better deliver on their commitment to provide housing for Bowen Islanders.”*

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# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In June 2025 the BIRCH board gathered for a full day workshop, lead by Maria Turnbull of Vantage Point Consulting. The outcome was 3 Strategic Priorities:

1. Project Delivery
2. Financial Sustainability
3. Organizational Development

Year 1 Success Measures	Where we are
Broke ground on Miller Road (lot 3)	Imminent
Year 1 operational funds received	Achieved
Business Plan developed, including road map of financial sustainability	Completed
Policies and procedures in place	Developing
Community aware of what BIRCH does and supports us	Ongoing
Defined the housing “mix” most suitable to achieve vision	Developing
Solidified and strengthened BIMS and BIRCH relationship/partnership	Achieved

# WORK PLAN

## Administrative or Governance

Year 1 Success Measures	Where we are
Recruit new board members and establish updated board	Achieved
Include BIM Councilors as Board Members	Achieved
Establish/update bylaws, as needed to match partnering agreement	In progress
Strategic planning with new Board	Achieved
Evaluate and update mission/vision/values/purpose with Board	Ongoing
Establish work plan and milestones/deliverables/goals to measure progress	Achieved
Undertake a Collaborative Review with BIM to establish Work Plans for 2026 and 2027, and report on 2026 and 2027 Work Plans to BIM Council	Upcoming

## IN 2025, BIRCH GREW TO....



STAFF



BOARD  
MEMBERS



BIM REPS  
ON BOARD

# WORK PLAN

## Organizational Development

Year 1 Success Measures	Where we are
Establish and define / develop / map out governance policies, procedures, and decision-making processes	Developing
Develop roles and responsibilities for staff	Completed
Operations – develop policies / HR / procedures, communications	Developing
Develop succession plans for board and staff	Upcoming
Additional: explore charitable status	Developing

## Financial Sustainability

Year 1 Success Measures	Where we are
Create a business plan which includes a roadmap to long term financial sustainability	Achieved
Identify business plan components and their income streams. Define BIRCH programs and projects (scope/streams)	Upcoming
Create financial policies anticipating increased cash flow	Developing
Establish clear and consistent annual budgeting process	Developing
Monitor budget vs actuals	Developing

# WORK PLAN

## Housing Development

Establish agreement to lease on municipal land (ie. Area 1, lot 1) and move towards development of non-market housing

Year 1 Success Measures	Where we are
Coordinate with BIM and identify affordable housing elements of other developers' projects	Ongoing – through referrals from BIM council
Monitor and report back to BIRCH on Miller Road project in partnership with Lookout	Ongoing – biweekly meetings attended by BIRCH staff and/or board member. Updates shared at monthly board meetings.  Approx. completion date: end 2027/early 2028
Pursue and develop Lot 1	Ongoing
Pursue Acquisition opportunities	<b>NEW:</b> In progress



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# OUR TEAM

## BOARD

David McCullum (Chair), Amy Seabrook (Vice Chair), Aaron Davison (Secretary/Treasurer), Philippa Gumley, Alex Jurgensen (BIM Council Representative), Adam Lougheed, Jack Resels, Tim Wake (BIM Council Representative)

## STAFF

In 2025 BIRCH hired part-time staff

Robyn Fenton (Executive Director), Nigel Malkin (Housing Development Manager), Quentin Beck (Administrative Manager)

## VOLUNTEERS

Mark Shieh (Lot 1 subcommittee), Georgia Redmond (Governance Committee)

# ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Hired part time staff – Executive Director, Housing Development Manager and Administrative Manager
2. Engaged Consultants (Vantage Point Consulting) to develop Strategic Plan and work plan with ongoing consulting
3. Engaged Business Consultant to aid to identify resilient and flexible business models for BIRCH
4. Representation at regional conferences (Housing Central)
5. Ongoing staff development
6. Establishment of systems and processes
7. Community Engagement / Communications (website)
8. Look to develop a 5-year business plan and an acquisition and development strategy.

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# BIRCH BOARD 2025/2026



**DAVID MCCULLUM**  
**CHAIR**



**AMY SEABROOKE**  
**VICE CHAIR**



**AARON DAVISON**  
**SECRETARY/  
TREASURER**



**ADAM LOUGHEED**  
**DIRECTOR**



**JACK REELS**  
**DIRECTOR**



**PHILIPPA GUMLEY**  
**DIRECTOR**

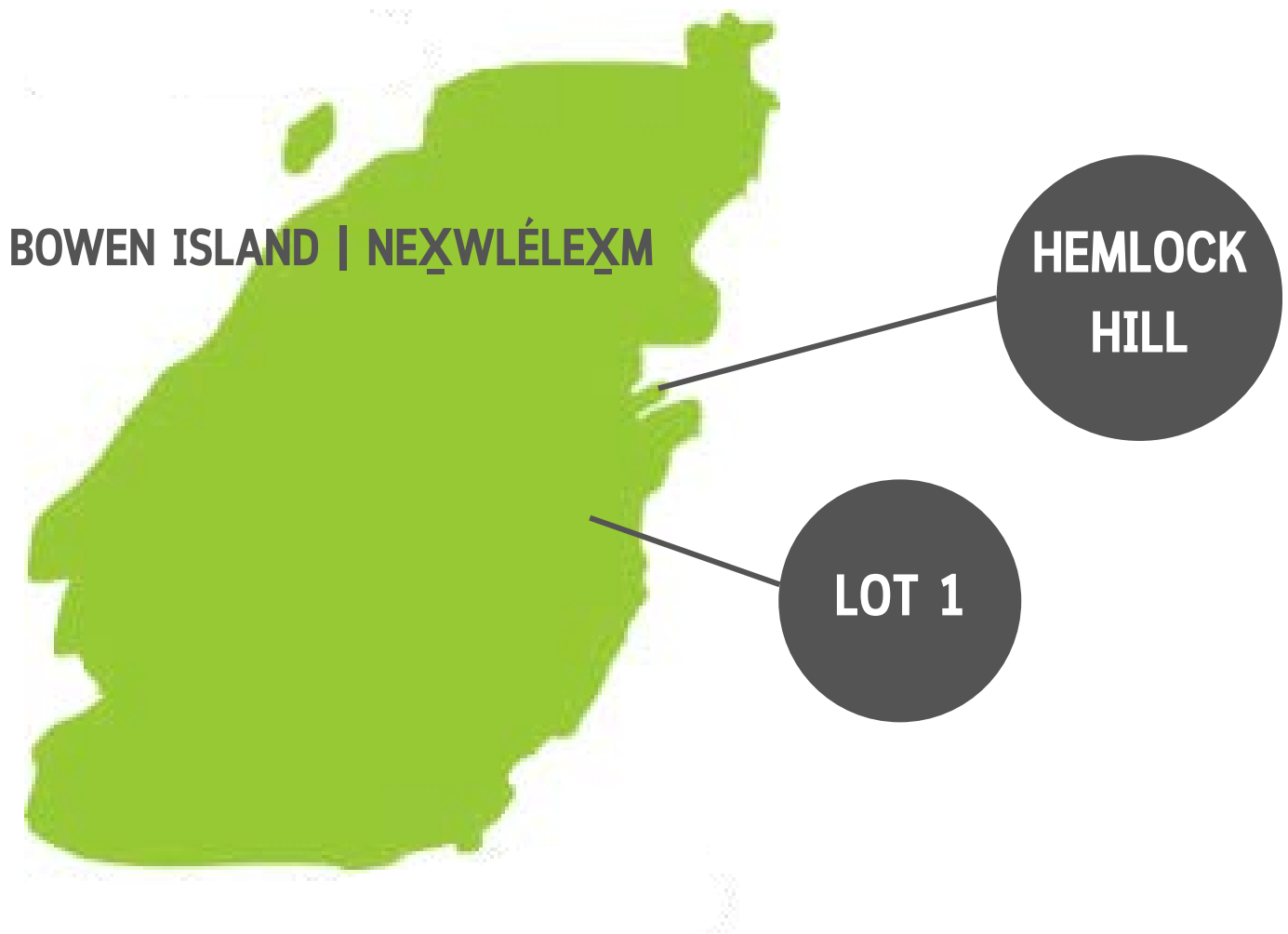


**TIM WAKE**  
**DIRECTOR**  
**BIM REPRESENTATIVE**



**ALEX JURGENSEN**  
**DIRECTOR**  
**BIM REPRESENTATIVE**

# PROJECTS IN PROGRESS



## BY THE NUMBERS

	Rental	Ownership
Units in pre-development	0	0
Units in development	25*	0
Units in construction	0	0
Units operational/complete	0	0

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# PROJECT UPDATES - LOT 1

## Moving into the Next Stage

At its December 8th meeting, BIM Council approved \$150,000 in funding to enable BIRCH to continue advancing our work on Lot 1. These funds are being deployed to complete the critical pre-development work required to move toward a development-ready concept.

## Site Design Concept



## Advancing Lot 1: From Concept to Implementation

Since December, BIRCH has begun deploying these funds to advance Lot 1 from a conceptual framework into a detailed, evidence-based planning phase.

Building on the Tomo/BIRCH Housing Advisory Committee (HAC) report, work has focused on assembling the technical, environmental, and market data required to inform a viable and community-aligned development approach.

This work provides a stronger empirical foundation for decision-making and ensures that future design and phasing align with demonstrated community need.

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# LOT 1...

## Technical and Site Due Diligence – Current Status

BIRCH has initiated the core technical studies required to move Lot 1 toward site design and development readiness.

### Workstreams Supporting Pre-Development Include:

#### **Arborist Assessment (Complete)**

Identification of trees of significance to inform site planning, environmental stewardship, and layout constraints.

#### **Phase 1 Environmental Assessment (Complete)**

Establishes baseline environmental conditions and informs risk, due diligence requirements, and next-phase investigations if required.

#### **Topographical Survey (Complete)**

Provides the base mapping required to support site planning, grading strategy, and engineering design.

#### **Wastewater Servicing Analysis (Underway)**

Evaluates servicing approaches and capacity constraints to inform site layout and phasing strategy.

#### **Water Servicing Planning (Underway)**

Assesses infrastructure availability and constraints in coordination with BIM Public Works to guide development feasibility.

#### **Electrical Engineering (Underway)**

Identifies servicing requirements and integration considerations to support site planning and future design.

#### **Market Study (Underway)**

Informs unit mix, tenure strategy, and revenue assumptions to support financial modeling and project viability.

**Collectively, these workstreams are converging to support the next major milestone: engagement of an Architect (targeted for May 2026) to translate findings into site design and phasing scenarios.**

# LOT 1...

## From Data to Design

The integration of environmental, infrastructure, and market data will enable BIRCH to move into a design phase grounded in real constraints and opportunities.

The upcoming architectural scope will focus on:

- Site layout options responsive to environmental and servicing conditions
- Phasing strategies aligned with infrastructure capacity and funding realities
- Unit mix and tenure models informed by survey and market data
- Financial modeling to ensure long-term viability

This approach is intended to reduce downstream risk, improve cost certainty, and ensure alignment with BIM's infrastructure planning.



# LOT 1...

## Budget Overview

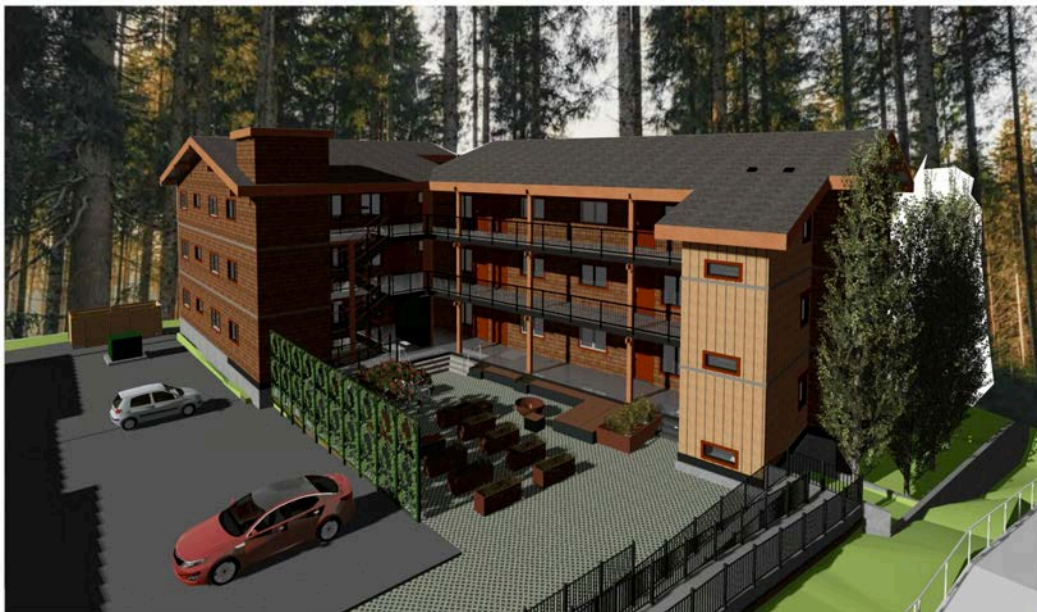
Consultant	Budget	Actual Spent Committed *excluding GST	Remaining
Architect	\$30,000	\$25,000	\$5,000
Civil Engineer	\$12,000	0	\$12,000
Geotechnical Engineer	\$12,000	0	\$12,000
Environmental Consultant	\$3,000	\$2,850	\$150
Waste Water	\$12,000	\$4,000	\$8,000
Topographic Survey	\$12,000	\$9,730	\$2,270
Development Consultant	\$30,000	\$16,800	\$13,200
Market Study	\$6,500	\$10,375	-\$3,875
Arborist	\$4,500	\$1,475	\$3,025
Electrical	\$12,000	\$7,000	\$5,000
Legal	\$3,000	0	\$3,000
Contingency	\$12,500	0	\$12,500
Disbs	\$500	0	\$500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>	<b>\$77,230</b>	<b>\$72,770</b>

# PROJECT UPDATES - HEMLOCK HILL VILLAGE (LOT 3)

In partnership with the Lookout Health and Housing Society, a 25-unit building is planned for a municipally owned site behind the health centre on Miller Road. This project will include 70% of units at subsidized rent levels. Significant milestones were reached in 2025 as this much-anticipated project moves toward construction:

- All permits have been submitted and are expected to be issued by early 2026
- Funding is in the final approval stages
- Construction is anticipated to begin in June 2026, with completion late 2027/early 2028

Hemlock Hill Village will deliver much-needed secure rental housing for Bowen Island, and we are energized by its momentum.



# BIRCH SURVEYS

Year	Responses
2019	325
2022	143
2026 Community Survey	199

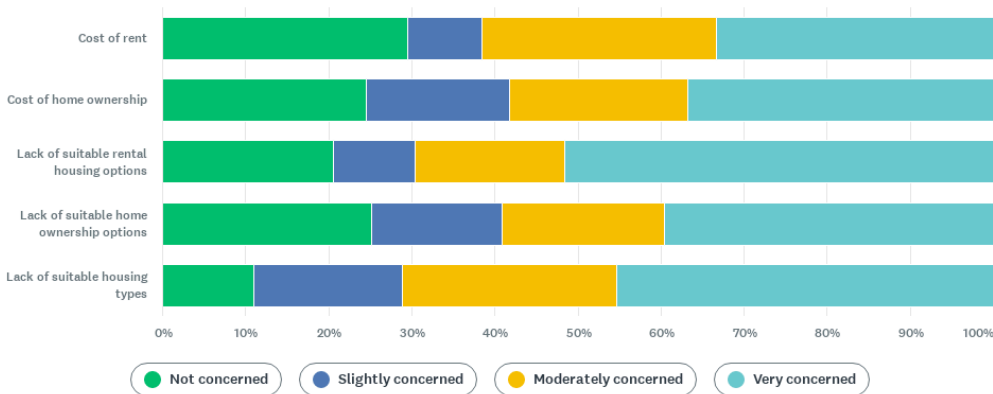
**NEW IN 2026  
EMPLOYER SURVEY**



**Employer responses**

## 2026 Community Survey

Which housing issues are of personal concern for you?

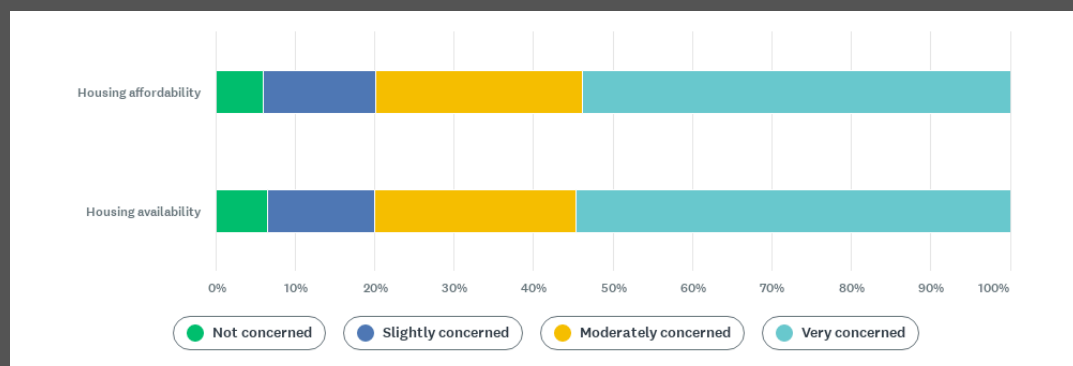


**RESPONDENTS  
> 50 YEARS**



**TO WHAT EXTENT ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND AVAILABILITY ISSUES ON BOWEN ISLAND?**

**2026 BiRCH Housing Survey**



# 2026 EMPLOYER SURVEY

## Overview

23 Bowen-based employers participated. The survey reflects primarily small businesses, with 74% employing 1-5 staff. Key sectors include trades/construction, tourism, retail, and service.

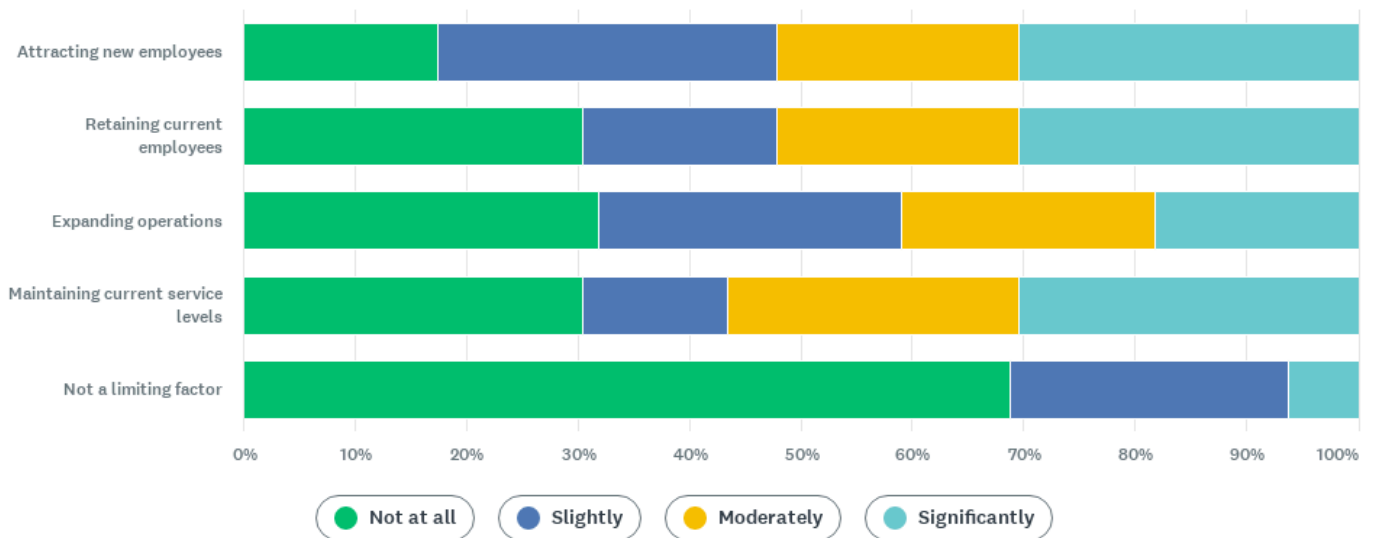
**39%**

of employers reported lost hires due to housing

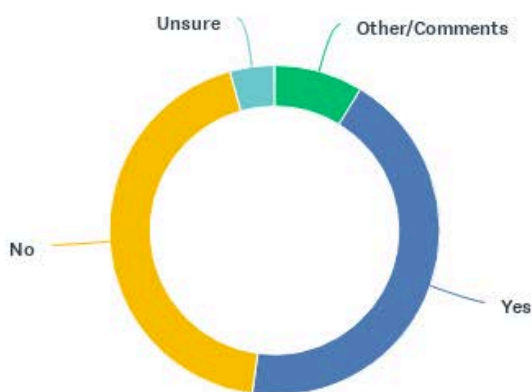
**43%**

of employers rely on commuting staff

## Do you consider housing availability on Bowen Island a limiting factor in:



## DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE EMPLOYEES OR SUBCONTRACTORS WHO COMMUTE TO BOWEN ISLAND FOR WORK BECAUSE THEY CANNOT FIND HOUSING LOCALLY?



Commuting Staff	%
Full Time Staff	73%
Part Time Staff	47%
Seasonal Staff	47%

# BIRCH 2025 YEAR END FINANCES

REVENUE	
Bowen Island Municipality	\$150,000
Project Revenue	\$153,900
Other Income	\$64
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$303,964</b>
EXPENSES	
Project Costs	\$7,150
Staff Costs	\$27,617
Consultants	\$4,838
Legal + Accounting	\$4,210
Professional Development	\$578
Office Expenses	\$3,579
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$47,972</b>
<b>YEAR END</b>	<b>\$255,992</b>



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2026

- Lot 1 Project advancement
- Exploring Charitable Status
- Advancing housing development projects, including acquisitions
- Deepening partnerships (including Bowen Island Municipality)
- Continuing to respond to community-identified housing needs

PHOTO BY: QUENTIN BECK



**BIRCH**

Bowen Island Resilient  
Community Housing

**THANK YOU  
TO OUR:**

COMMUNITY PARTNERS  
DONORS  
GRANT FUNDERS  
VOLUNTEERS  
SURVEY PARTICIPANTS  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS

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