

Alternative Uses of Dwellings

Vacant dwellings: seasonal use?

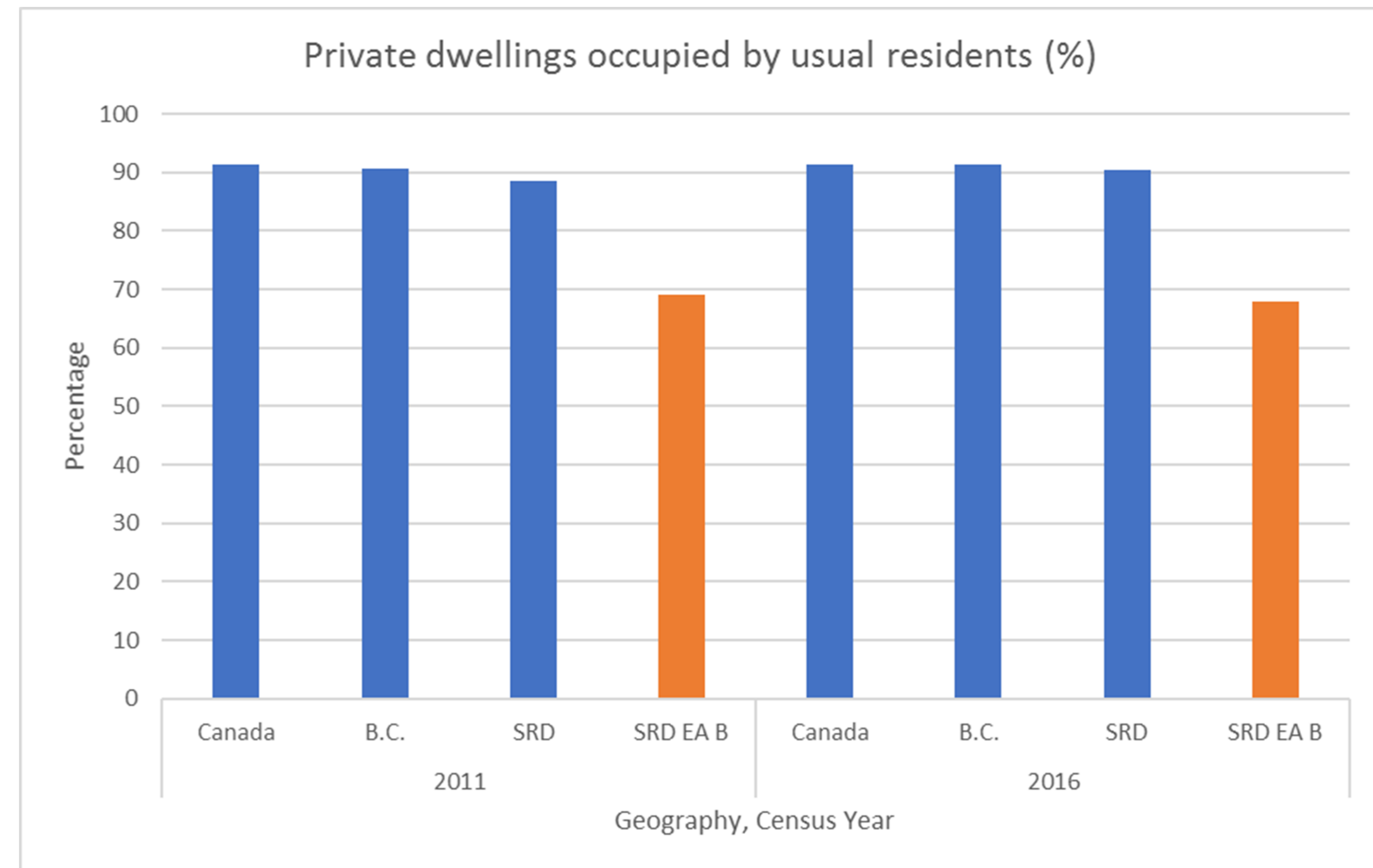
Vacant dwellings: census terms

For the 2016 census, ‘private dwelling occupied by usual residents’ refers to a private dwelling in which a person or a group of persons is permanently residing¹. Included are private dwellings whose usual residents are temporarily absent on census day².

The 2016 census counts 788 private dwellings. Of those, 535 are dwellings occupied by the usual residents. There is no data that clarifies what is happening to the other 253 dwellings (32%). They could be seasonal dwellings vacant for part of the year, vacation rentals or something else.

¹ <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/dwelling-logements006-eng.cfm>

2 May 10, 2016



SRD EA B refers to SRD Electoral Area B

Data quality

There is a lack of data because there are no permits for residential development on Cortes Island. As a result, there is an unknown number of dwellings without their own house number. These may not receive the census questionnaire to complete.

Alternative Uses of Dwellings

Clarifying uses

Tourist accommodation uses*

Historically, zoning regulations could relatively easily distinguish between residential uses and temporary tourist accommodation because buildings were quite different from one another. Today, tourists are often accommodated in private residences.

Fundamentally, the use of a building for tourist accommodation is a commercial use that has different land use impacts from those caused by a residential use of the same building. Examples of these impacts are

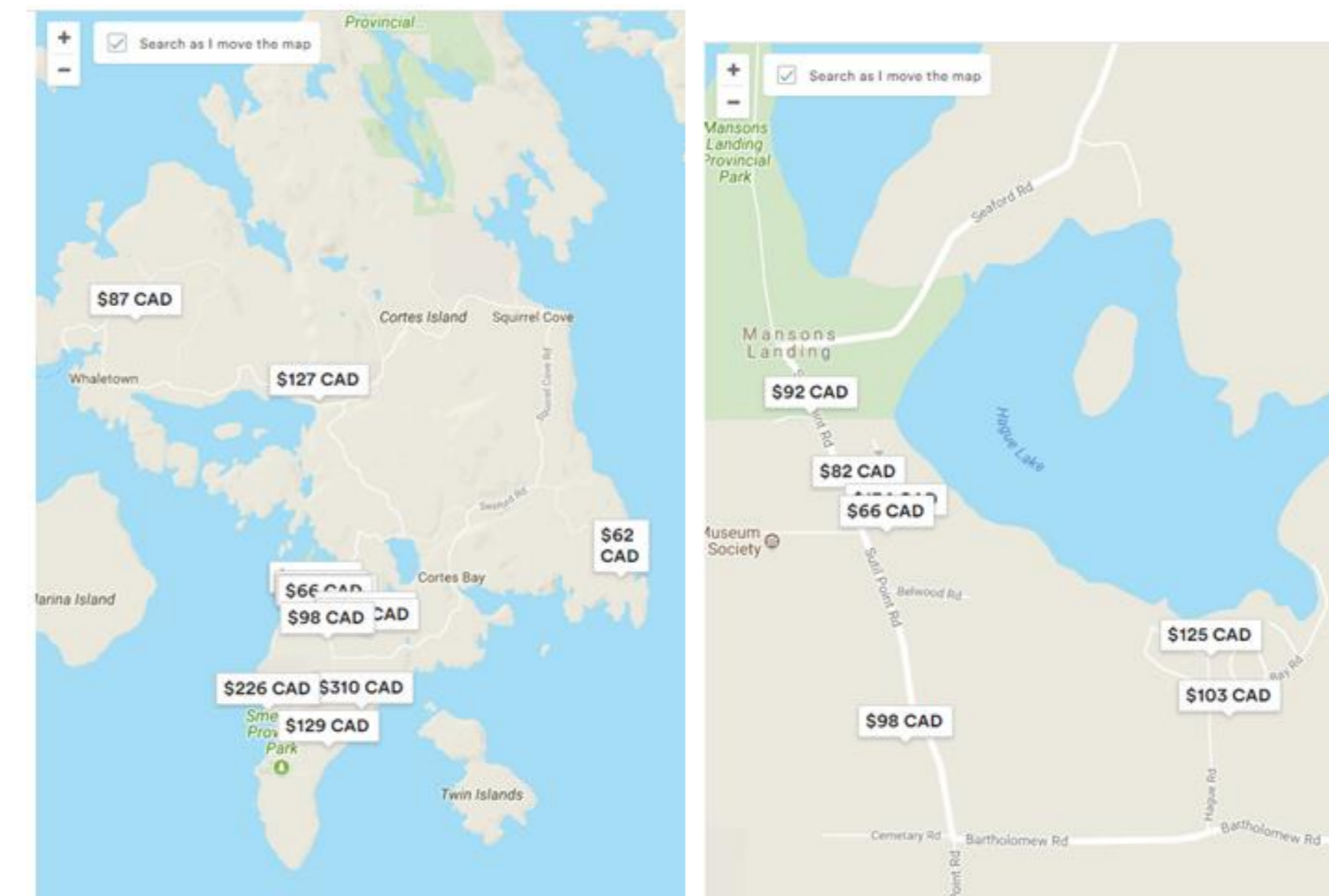
- water use (e.g., more frequent laundry)
- strangers frequently moving in and out (affects rural character)
- traffic volumes and parking demands

To distinguish between residential or commercial (tourist accommodation occupancies), reference must be made to the pattern of actual use. The distinction can be based on the typical period of occupancy. Because residential tenancies generally have monthly terms, occupancy of dwellings for less than a month is usually considered a temporary accommodation use.

RECOMMENDATION

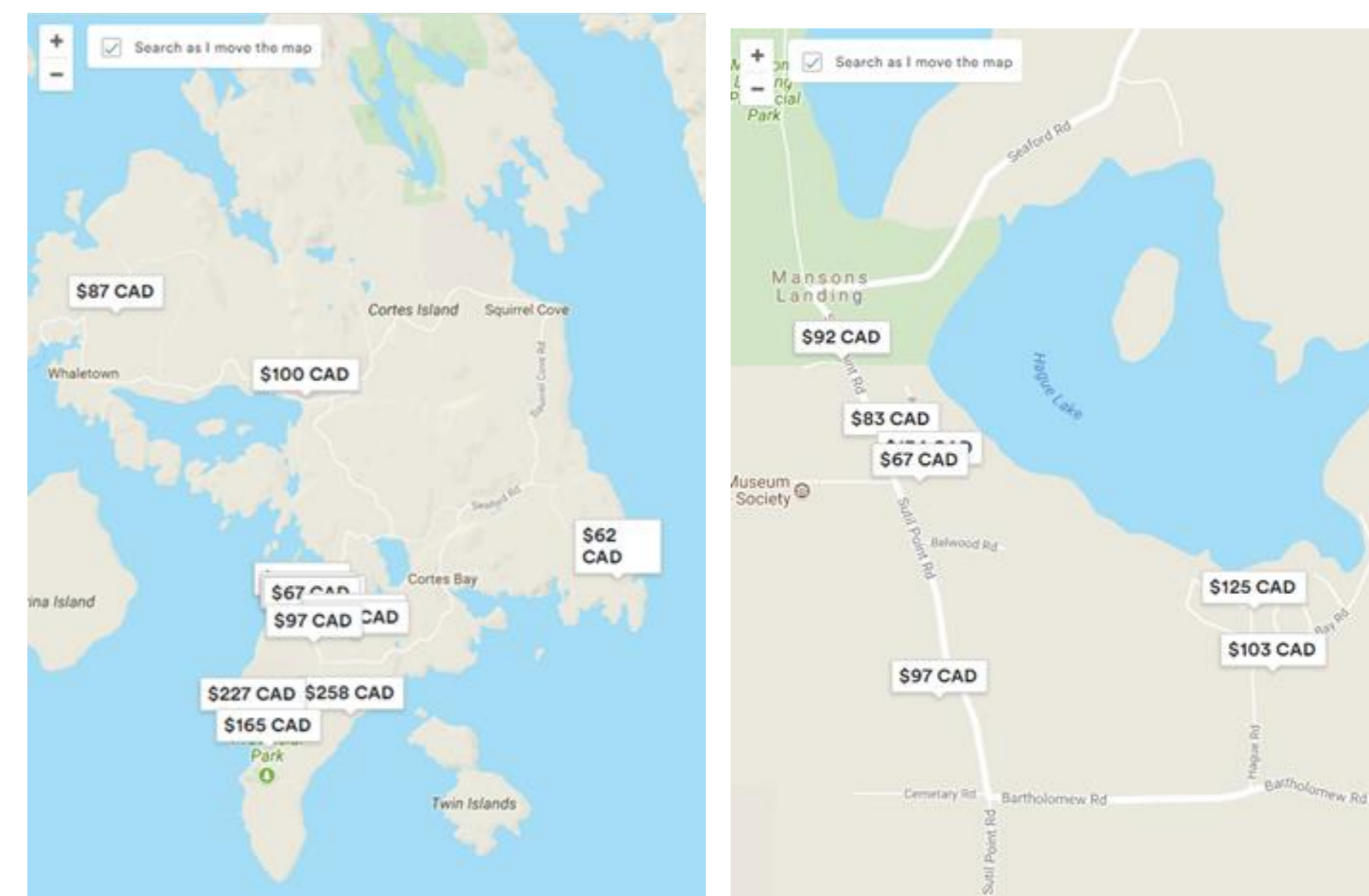
7. Require Home Occupation Permits for occupancy of dwellings for rentals of less than one month.

Air BnB: just one example of online vacation rental service



October 23, 2017:

- 13 cottage rentals
- about half near or in Mansons Landing
- 66 to 310 \$/night



December 22, 2017:

- 14 cottage rentals
- about half near or in Mansons Landing
- 62 to 242 \$/night

* This section is based on W. Buholzer, *BC Planning Law & Practice*, December 2017 update, sections 7-107 to 7-110

Regulating Uses of Dwellings

Short-term and tourist accommodations

Current regulation

Cortes Island Zoning Bylaw No. 2455, 2002, does not explicitly reference short-term vacation rentals in residential zones.

In the definitions, the bylaw states that tourist accommodation excludes the use or occupancy of permanent residential units (other than within a B&B operation).

Tourist Recreational Commercial (TRC) zones permit 'tourist accommodation' and residential uses.

RECOMMENDATION

8. Clarify the difference between tourist recreational commercial, tourist accommodation and residential use in the definition section.

Discussion

Short term vacation rentals contribute to the local economy and help some Cortes residents make a living. At the same time, they decrease the availability of year-round rental housing. To meet both the needs for locally derived income and adequate rental supply, it is proposed to restrict vacation rentals to one unit per lot, allowing other units to be used for long-term rentals or to be owner-occupied. This is an attempt to balance owners' interest in supplementing their income by vacation rentals with the need on Cortes for year-round rental accommodation.

RECOMMENDATION

9. On any residential lot, one dwelling unit only may be used as a short-term vacation rental at any given time. All other units on the same lot must be occupied by a permanent resident, whether it be the owner or a long-term renter.